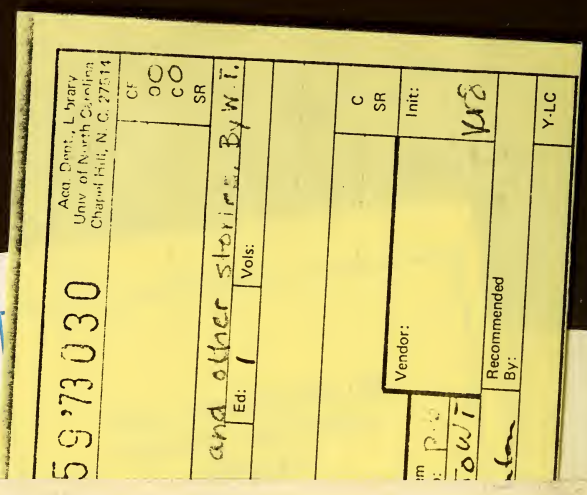

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"Winding through the brown and yellow woods."

Thos. C. Turnbull
1915

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THE

WANDERING MASON

AND

OTHER STORIES.

BY

W. T.

ILLUSTRATED.

LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS,
1874.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Wandering Mason	1
The Golden Ram	39
Milton's Golden Lane	106
One New Year's Eve	122
A Night of Tortures	158
Going Hopping	177
Twelve Miles from the Royal Exchange	199
The Portrait of a Spy	213
Loitering by the Way	237
The Abbot's Garden	254
The Elixir of Life	279
An Englishman's Castle	287

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THE WANDERING MASON.

Close against the church of St. Maclou, at Rouen, in an ancient house, whose topmost windows seemed almost within arm's reach of the church walls, dwelt, in the early part of the present century, a widow and her daughter, named La Roquette. The house is still standing, although too dilapidated to be inhabited, and is said to be the oldest in that most ancient quarter of the city. The row of houses, of which this stands at the corner (forming an angle with the street leading to the church door on the western side), though evidently more modern, are built with the same projecting floors, leaving such a narrow ribbon of sky overhead, that the rough-paved and straggling street below is dusky at noon of a summer's day. At this time the widow kept a shop there, and sold small Roman Catholic trinkets,—beads, wooden crosses, and wreaths of dried flowers, with which the people ornament the graves of their kindred, and the altars of their saints, upon certain days. The daughter was a worker of worsted slippers, some beautiful speci-

mens of which are still made and sent to Paris, and even to foreign countries, by the people of Rouen. The widow had been left with another child—a son, some years older than the daughter, who had fallen into evil courses, absconded from a jeweller's employment, to whom the widow had paid an apprentice-fee—the fruit of long struggle and privation—gone to sea and come back again, involved himself in political riots in the city, and had been a great trouble to her in her affliction. At the time when he had lived with her in the house, the neighbours had frequently been compelled to protect her from his violence; but at the period of which I speak she had not seen him for some time, and did not know whether he were still in the city.

Throughout a whole winter food had been dear, and the widow's resources had been scantier than ever, for the people had then no money to spare for the articles she sold. In such times she had little for her support but the ill-paid work of her daughter, Nenette, who toiled early and late to supply their wants, looking forward to the winter to lighten her labour. There was a long frost that winter, which continued till near the end of the month of March. With all their industry and frugality they were sorely pinched at times; they had nothing now to keep them from day to day but the work of Nenette; she knew this, and never failed to go to prayers every morning, at daylight, in the church of St. Maclou, where, kneeling beside her little wooden chair upon the cold stone pavement,

sometimes alone, she prayed, for her mother's sake, for the bread of that day.

Every night, as the great church clock struck nine, Nenette made up her little packet of work, and set out, alone, to the shop of the dealer, in another quarter of the city. The streets were badly lighted at that time, and, except in the principal thoroughfares, the shops were closed before she started; but she was not afraid, or tried to think she was not, that her old mother might not be anxious whilst she was gone. Once, however, she could not help thinking that some one had followed her at a distance, both in going and returning. She did not speak of it to her mother, but she lay awake that night thinking of it anxiously; she thought that it might be her brother, but she reflected that he could have no object in following her but to speak with her, in which case he would not have allowed her to return without stopping her; knowing this, and also that their poverty was well known, she strove to persuade herself that it was a fancy, banishing her fears as well as she could till she fell asleep, but they came back again in dreams.

She rose in the morning before daylight, and worked till from her window she saw the church door opened, when she went across, as usual, to prayers. The masons were at work there with their noisy hammers, but Nenette did not hear them after a while. Except the masons, and the old lame beggar-woman who sat beside the inner door from morning till night, Nenette was the only person there at that early hour. When

she rose to go, the old woman pulled the cord of the door for her, but without asking for alms, as was her custom. She shivered, for the morning was frosty, and her breath made a cloud about her. "I have not given you a liard since Toussaints, Esther," said Nenette; "I can only give you a blessing now-a-days."

"God keep you from harm," said the old woman; "your blessing is better than the money of many."

That night Nenette went out earlier than usual, although it was quite dark. She shut the door, and looked up and down the street, but it was quite deserted. Looking, however, by accident towards the entrance to the church, she thought that some one was standing there. The porch was deep, and darker than the street, but she fancied that it was the figure of a man. She hesitated a moment, for she knew that the church had been closed for an hour past, and she had never seen any one before standing there after the doors were fastened. She drew out her key to open the door again, but a fear of alarming her mother, perhaps without occasion, restrained her. "If I run over and knock at the door of Madame Boutard," she thought, "what would they say to me? that I am dreaming, perhaps; and then, if they should come out to look, and find no one—for the man would no doubt be gone by then—I should look as silly as Jeanne Floquet, when she found the white hen under her bed." But a stronger reason with Nenette was the necessity of the errand she was upon; "Shall my mother want bread to-morrow for my folly?" thought she; "has

not the dealer told me many a time that he is busy in the morning, and will only give out work and pay money at night?" She put her key into her pocket again, and walked away quickly.

She did not look back before she got into the main street, but once stopped to tie up her bundle again in order to listen for any one following her without appearing to do so, but she heard no one. The shops were only then shutting up, and she had nothing to fear there, but she could not always keep in the main street. The slipper-merchant lived on the western side of the city, and Nenette was obliged to turn down the Rue St. Romain, a dark and straggling lane, running up to the cathedral. She had got nearly to the end of this street, when she heard a footstep behind her at a distance, exactly as she had heard it the night before. She walked faster, and once, in another street, heard it again, but by the time she had reached her destination she had missed it altogether, and feeling then bolder, she looked back, but saw no one. Nenette determined to tell the slipper-dealer of her fears, for it struck her now that the man, knowing by some means her errand, waited only to rob her upon her way back. The slipper-dealer looked grave at first, but having walked some distance down the street in the direction she had come, and seeing no one, and probably not wishing to be put to trouble, he laughed at her story, and told her to count her beads, and not to look behind her till she reached her home. The man meant to reassure her, but his words seemed to her so cruel, that the tears

came into her eyes. "And yet, if it should be a robber," she said, almost imploringly, as she lingered on the threshold; "if they stole my money it would be a sad day for us to-morrow; we have not five haricots in the house."

"Never fear, Nenette," said the man; "if I thought there was any danger, look you, I would put up my shutters directly, and go with you. Never think that a man would follow you all this way and back again for the sake of two-and-twenty sous; you have been thinking how precious the money is to you just now, till you fancy that some one is going to rob you. Stay, my child," continued the man, as she was about to turn away; "you have never said before that you were so poor as that. If you should lose your money, come to me in the morning at daylight; but never fear that any one would follow a poor girl to rob her of two-and-twenty sous. *Va!*"

Nenette dried her tears, and thanked the man; she thought that he must be right—his affectionate *tutoiement*, had given her courage again, and she walked briskly towards home the same way that she had come.

And yet, as if by magic, she heard the footsteps again behind her before she had got half-way down a long street. By dint of listening intently, she thought she even knew the step, and could be sure that it was the same. She would not have forgotten to count her beads even if the slipper-merchant had not told her; nor did she omit to say little scraps of prayers, which are held by her Church to have peculiar power when in

danger of violence. After these it seemed to her little short of a miracle that the footsteps grew more distant, and at last died away altogether.

Nenette had much trouble to conceal from her mother her agitation. The widow thought that her manner was strange. Had the slipper-dealer said there would be no more work shortly? and how came she to forget to buy some lentils on her way home? How fast she had gone! she had been and come back like a bird, though she had finished her work earlier than usual; and how strange she should forget the lentils!

Nenette trimmed the lamp, and said, "Indeed the master had spoken kindlier that night than ever; she did not know how she came to forget the lentils; she would go and get them in the morning, in the Rue Gros Horloge, where they were better and cheaper than she could have got them anywhere at that hour; meanwhile, she could knock at Madame Boutard's, and buy some bread."

Nenette went out again; the street was quite deserted. She looked towards the church porch, but there was no one there. Nenette went back without the bread.

The widow had lighted some bits of charcoal in a little pan, thinking to sit there awhile and talk with her daughter, but when she found that she could get no bread, she thought they had better not sit up.

"It was very foolish of me to forget the lentils," said Nenette.

"We shall want no supper if we go to sleep," said the old woman; "we never thought to be pinched like this when we lived at Pont de l'Arche, in the old time when your father was alive. Phillipe was a good and honest boy then."

"Poor Phillipe!" said Nenette; "I wonder where he is to-night."

"Why should you wonder, child?" replied the old woman; "does he think of us? No, no; I cannot forgive Phillipe the ruin he has brought upon us. It is hard to speak like this of my own child; but when I know how good you are, Nenette, and how you suffer for his conduct,—when I see you day by day working and enduring this poverty, from which he might and should have saved you, what wonder that my anger against him keeps alive!"

Nenette took the lamp, and they went upstairs together. Her mother slept in the room of an old woman lodging in the house. She bade her "good night!" upon the landing, giving her the lamp. "I can find my way up without a light," said she; "never fear, mother, the dark does not frighten me."

Cold, and very hungry, though she had tried to think she was not, the girl went up the dark stairs to her little chamber. The moon had come out, and it was so light that she could see everything in the room. She lay in bed, and saw the line of light along the tiled floor, and the crucifix upon the mantel-piece; and through her window the masonry of the church, more rich than many cathedrals. But when her cold bed

"The masonry of the church was more rich than many cathedrals."

became warmer, and she dropped asleep, she wandered far away from there, dreaming of the town of Pont de l'Arche, her birthplace. Pont de l'Arche is higher up the Seine; a very ancient town, with a castle standing in ruins by the water-side, and a bridge overgrown with shrubs clinging to the brickwork, and growing upon the buttresses and deltas, about the piers, and on wooden houses, that look themselves as if they grew out of the parapet. Nenette saw all this, and the dark forest upon the hills beyond, for the moon was shining in her dream.

II.

Early in the morning, before the lamps were out in the streets, Nenette rose and went out to buy the lentils. It was daylight when she returned, but her mother was not awake, so she put back the shutters below, and employed her time in brushing the dust from the articles in the shop. When she had done this she lighted a charcoal fire in the little brazier, and set the lentils to boil.

In the midst of these operations she heard a footstep in the shop. She found a stranger there. Nenette knew by his dress that he was one of the masons working in the church, and afterwards she remembered seeing him there at work, and sometimes at mass on Sundays.

"I wish to buy a rosary or two," said the stranger; "old Esther told me I could get them here."

"More than one?" asked Nenette, who was not less astonished to have a customer at that early hour, than she was to hear him ask for several rosaries.

"Yes," he replied; "I have to make some presents."

Nenette showed him some of turned oak, and some of glass, and he took them up and examined them.

"They are very strong in the clasps," said Nenette, with all the air of the shopkeeper with a customer who hesitates. Her visitor selected two, and said he would take some others if she had any better.

"I have some necklaces like these with crosses," said Nenette, "and others, that look like jet, without crosses, for one franc and a half; those you have bought are one franc apiece. See," she said, taking out a little drawer and showing them. The man took them up and examined them also, Nenette scrutinising his features as he was looking down, as if to anticipate an objection. He lingered so long that she thought he must be going to find fault with them.

"The clasps of these are even better than the others," she said at length. "I wear one now like them, which I have worn three years, and the clasp is not broken or tarnished, as I will show you."

When Nenette lifted up her arms to unfasten the clasp behind her neck, her round figure showed so well that it was no wonder that she caught her visitor's

eyes fixed upon her. Nenette's cheek reddened, and she thought again within herself that it was very strange that he should come to buy necklaces at that time in the morning. She gave her beads into his hand, and he looked at them and gave them back again. He said "they were very neat; could she take the crosses from the one sort and put them on the plain necklaces if he paid a higher price for them?" Nenette thought she could; but this was a difficult task. She tried at first to open the ring with her fingers, but she failed; then she essayed with the scissors that she kept hanging to her side; and finally she tried her teeth.

Her visitor drew in his breath as if afraid that she might hurt herself, and said it did not matter; but Nenette assured him that if he could wait a minute she should be able to accomplish it; she had a penknife upstairs that would open it in a moment, and, without leaving him time to make an objection, she turned away, and ran up to her room. But the penknife was not to be found. "How tiresome," said Nenette, who began to fear that her sudden good fortune would slip from her by some accident; "I am sure I left it here last night; he will be tired of waiting, and go away without buying anything, and perhaps never come back." She turned her workbox over and over, raked out her bag of coloured wools, lifted up her frame to look under it half a dozen times, and flung it down sharply on the table. Then she recollected that she had not felt in her pocket,—and found it there after all. Her

customer was not gone when she reached the shop, but was sitting there, apparently in no haste to depart. Nenette tried the knife, and opening the rings of three crosses, according to the stranger's directions, transferred the crosses to the plain necklaces, when, looking up, she caught her visitor's eyes again fixed upon her. She could not help feeling embarrassed, and a little awkward in wrapping the necklaces in paper; and when she said that he had to pay her eight francs her cheek grew redder than ever. Her customer, however, did not seem to remark her confusion, but having paid her the money, bade her respectfully "good morning."

"What a strange man!" thought Nenette. She looked at the money as it lay on the counter, half afraid to touch it; nor was it strange that, taught from earliest childhood to believe and respect the multitudinous legends that form a part of her faith, she should feel a dread lest in taking up the money she might be unknowingly completing some unholy bargain. "He did not talk like we do," she thought,—for he spoke her language with a foreign accent. "And when have I ever known any one come into our shop a little after daylight, and buy five necklaces, especially at this time of year, when people do not make presents, like at New Year's Day or at the time of the Fair?" But she thought of her mother, and how well it was to have a little stock of money, so that if her work should fail her one day they might not be without lentils in the house; upon which she began to think

that she ought to take up the money, and be very thankful for it; and that if she could find out that it was the mason who had bought them, and not a semblance of him assumed to deceive her, there would be nothing to fear.

She hastily gathered up the eight francs, and turned to go up to her mother's bedroom with them, but she met her at the foot of the stairs. "Stay, mother," cried Nenette, "tell me your dreams." The old woman "had not been dreaming, or could not recollect her dreams if she had; what had happened?"

"I dreamt of the moon shining on the river," said Nenette, "which, they say, means a shower of silver money."

"Well?"

"My dream is true,—see!" She held out the money, in franc and half-franc pieces, in her hand. The old woman looked puzzled; "Could she have had a customer so early, and a customer who had spent all that money?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the daughter; "and who do you think it was?"

"Pierre, the hawker?"

"No; no one buying to sell again; a customer who bought them for himself, and paid one and two francs apiece for them. But you will never guess; shall I say?"

"Stay!" said the old woman; "it was Hendrich."

Nenette's face grew reflective for a moment; then she began to laugh so long and so loudly that the

widow became impatient. "She did not see anything to laugh at; if she had guessed the wrong person, that was not remarkable."

"No, no," said Nenette, striving to check her laughter, "it is not that you have guessed the wrong person; I was laughing to think that all the time I was telling you to guess, I had forgotten that I did not know myself. All I know is that he looked like one of the masons in the church, and he spoke like a stranger."

"That is he," said the widow; "it is Hendrich, the Danish man. I have often talked with him at the shop door. Old Esther told me that he had been a good friend to her all the winter; he knows how poor we are, and takes this way to help us."

The joy of Nenette was a little dulled with the thought that the stranger's purchases were half an act of charity. That morning she ate her breakfast before going to prayers, for she had fasted a long time. The widow continued to talk of Hendrich at breakfast time, but her daughter was thoughtful and silent.

"And yet he said that he wanted them for presents," muttered Nenette as she went out.

She could scarcely drive this from her thoughts as she knelt at prayers in the church. The masons were still at work there, but she did not dare to lift up her eyes to see if her visitor was among them. As she went out she saw that old Esther had one of the rosaries of wooden beads hanging to her side, with a metal cross attached to it that Nenette herself had given her;

she knew by this that her mother's conjecture was right, and that her strange customer was Hendrich, the Danish mason.

It was determined that the money should be kept in case of need, and Nenette resolved to work as before till the fine weather came. She went still to the slipper-dealer's in the evening. Once or twice after that day she felt again the strange conviction that some one followed her, although now, she thought, at a greater distance than before. In spite of her having fancied this so often, she could not help feeling alarmed about it; for not knowing what motive could lead any one to molest her, she could not tell what reason might have induced the postponement of the design from day to day. Sometimes she was on the point of telling her mother her fears, but she knew that this would only alarm her without doing any good; for she was somewhat infirm, and could not go with her, or be any protection for her if she did.

Another night, going out later than usual, Nenette heard again the footsteps of her mysterious pursuer. She could not be mistaken this time. She felt sure that he had come from one of the doorways on the opposite side of the street. She passed along the Rue des Prêtresses (a street since rebuilt in modern style), and through the lane called St. Romain, hearing it still. It seemed to her that it grew nearer, but that the stranger walked more stealthily than before. She hastened, but still she heard the same footsteps stealing after her. The streets were very dark. She was sorry

that she had chosen the Rue St. Romain, instead of going round by the Place St. Ouen. The few little shops there, on the one side of the street, were all closed; and on the other side was only the sombre wall of the archiepiscopal palace. She hastened on over the rough paving-stones, interspersed with little pools of water, muttering her prayers and thinking how foolish she had been to neglect the many warnings she had had. "Only let me get safe home this time," she thought, "and to-morrow I will tell the curé, and he will advise me what to do."

And thus she got to the market-place, and again her pursuer seemed to have abandoned his design, for she listened and even looked back, but she could neither see nor hear him any longer. She would not speak to the slipper-dealer again, for she knew that her story would gain no credence from him, who had frequently rallied her about the last occasion, when he assured her that he never doubted that it was a timid girl's fancy; so she left his shop and took her way homeward, hoping that she might get back, as before, without injury.

Not hearing the footsteps any more, she took courage, and passed again through the Rue St. Romain; indeed there was scarcely less security there now than elsewhere, for all the shops in the busier streets were closed. She had reached the further end on her way back, and had turned into the street near her home, when a man who had just passed her turned back and called her by name. They stood near a lamp, and on looking round, she saw that it was her brother Phillipe.

"I thought it was Nenette," he said; "do you walk about the dark streets at this hour?"

Nenette thought from his manner that he had been drinking, and she felt afraid of him. "I have been to take my work home," she said. "We have nothing else to live on now."

"That is hard," replied the brother.

"Indeed it is," said Nenette. "I cannot tell you how we are troubled sometimes. Oh, Phillipe, how different this might have been!"

"It is too late to talk to me like that," said Phillipe. "What I have been I know; what I am, and what I might have been, I know. Your reproaches do no good."

"I did not mean it to reproach you," said Nenette. "I know you do not think of all this. I have said so many times. I did not mean to speak of what you might have been, but of what you might be still."

"What might I be still?" asked Phillipe, angrily. "You talk of what you don't understand. What can a man be who is watched and dogged as I am? Here am I these three or four months, hiding, because of that little skirmish at the Hôtel de Ville, like a rat in a hole, stealing out now and then when I have to beg a meal, or when a little liquor has made me bolder, as it has to-night. What would you have me do? What honest trade would you have me take to?"

"Indeed I do not know, said Nenette. "God help me to tell you! This is the only sorrow that I have,—

for our poverty only makes us cling together closer, my mother and me."

"It would be better to give me a little to help me in my miserable plight," he said. "I would not ask it from you when you are so poor yourselves, but hunger makes a man cruel."

Nenette thought of the money at home, and gave him all that she had received from the slipper-maker. "But tell me one thing, Phillipe," she said. "Have you ever followed me at night-time in the streets?"

"*I* follow you!" he answered. "When have I ever troubled you or your mother, spied your movements, or begged a sou of you till now, in all the time that I have been away from home? But look you, Nenette, two-and-twenty sous will not keep a man from jumping into the Seine if he had a mind to do it. Is that all you can give a brother who asks you for the first time?"

Nenette cried bitterly and said that she had no more.

"Come," he said, taking her roughly by the arm. "Tell me you have a week's work-money about you, and I shall know you speak the truth."

Nenette was terrified by his manner, and strove to withdraw her arm; but at that moment a man darted out of the dark street of St. Romain, through which she had just come, and thrust him from her so violently, with a blow upon the chest, that he reeled and staggered back several yards. Nenette was too frightened to know whether her deliverer was a companion of her brother's or not. She turned and ran swiftly

across the road to the corner of the street in which she lived; when, pausing to look back, she saw her brother and the stranger standing still under the lamp. She could hear their voices, as if they were talking angrily, although she could not distinguish their words. A moment afterwards, the stranger turned again quickly up the street from which he had issued, and her brother went on his way.

She could not conceal from the widow this time the cause of her agitation. They sat up late that night, talking over the circumstances which had so terrified her; and it was decided that she should go no more at night. Afterwards they made all doors and windows fast, and retired to bed.

When Nenette took her necklace off that night, she remarked, for the first time, that it looked newer than before. She took it up and examined the clasp, and was convinced that it was not the necklace which she handed to the mason to look at when he made the purchases in the shop. "Surely," said she, "he must have taken several in his hand at once, and afterwards given me the wrong one."

She lay awake that night thinking of the strange events of the day. Finally, she thought again of the necklace, and fancied that Hendrich might have exchanged it purposely for a new one,—a thought to her very fruitful of good dreams.

III.

When, at length, the frost broke up, and fine weather came, affairs grew better with the widow and her daughter. The privations of that winter had taught them a severe lesson, and Nenette resolved this year to endeavour to save something of their earnings to protect them when the cold season came again. This was not easy to do, for the profits of the shop were trifling at the best of times, and her own earnings never sufficed alone for their support. Some way, she thought, might perhaps be found for getting more money. But what way?

Many hours she sat alone upstairs at her window in that spring-time, musing, devising, castle-building. Sometimes she thought of selling the produce of her work in the shop; and the possible gains from this each day were multiplied and portioned out, till she forgot that her project had yet to be begun. Then some objection would come, and all her card-palace fell into a heap of ruins. "People would not come there to buy slippers, even if she got the shoemaker to put the soles to her embroidery. The dust would soil them if they lay long unsold, and both work and money would be lost. Better would it be," she thought, "to save something from the sale of the ornaments in the shop (as her mother had said), than to run such a risk. Surely twenty sous a week might be put by, making at least thirty francs before the cold weather. This would give them forty sous a week besides her work to live on

for fifteen weeks of the worst part of the season. But who knew that the next season would be bad? It could not be worse than the last; and she would work as before, and perhaps keep her money till the next year. To this she was adding the savings of another year, when a shadow came upon her thoughts, for she remembered her brother Phillipe, and saw in her memory a vivid picture of a night when, half imploring and half threatening, he took from them the fruit of some weeks' savings once before. She said to herself that, even with this prospect, it was her duty to strive: but her spirit was gone; the shadow kept upon her thoughts, and she built no more castles that day.

But it happened, a little before Easter, that Pierre, the hawker, on making some purchases of the widow, told her that he was to have a stall in the fair that is held along the Boulevard at that time, and offered to show for sale there anything that her daughter might make for the occasion. Here was a project that she had not dreamed of,—the best plan that could be devised come to her without seeking. Nenette said she thought they were now going to be fortunate after all their troubles; and the mother saw in it a new lesson upon the duty of waiting patiently.

Nenette worked now more diligently than ever. All kinds of new and beautiful designs came into her head as she sat in her bedroom working alone. Easter was at hand. One day, sitting with her window open, in the topmost room of the house, she heard the masons at work outside the church below; looking down she

saw that they had built up a slight scaffolding. She remembered her strange customer, and how, by some means, she had changed her necklace. She remembered their poverty, her fears in the street, and the strange way in which she had been parted from her brother Phillipe on the last night she had gone out alone; and these things and that dark winter, seemed to her like a long night of dreams, of which the spring-time was the awakening and the daylight. The next day, on rising, she looked out, and lo! the scaffolding was almost level with the window. It was a fine day, but no one came to work there all that morning. In the afternoon she heard some one moving on the platform. The window was open, and there was only a small space between them; and yet she did not look to see who was there, but looked down at her task and worked faster than ever; for, somehow, she knew that it was Hendrich at work there, and she was troubled about the necklace, which was still upon her neck. "I ought to have told him of his mistake at first," she thought; "but now it is so late that I do not like to speak to him about it." She wondered how it was that she had not done so before. "Had she secretly decided that he had changed it purposely?" She did not know herself; but she was afraid to see him again. She felt embarrassed. She was tempted to steal away, and work downstairs that day. But Hendrich said "Good day, neighbour," and she was obliged to look up and give him "good day" also.

"We find some work to do out of doors this fine

weather, Nenette," he said. "All this winter we have been working in the dusty church. It is a pleasure, after that, to work out here on a sunny day."

"The winter was very long and dreary," replied Nenette.

"It is colder sometimes in my country," said the mason; "but the spring is pleasant there too. Do you always work indoors?"

"Not always; sometimes in the summer I take my work and sit till dusk in the garden of the Hotel de Ville."

"It is hard to work so much in youth," said Hendrich. "Your mother has many a time told me how you worked for her in the winter, and what a blessing you were to her."

"I worked hard then," said Nenette, "because I was compelled. Now I work even harder; my task seems to me lighter because I work to please myself."

"And yet you will have worked to please others also, if you make such pretty designs as I have seen from your hands."

"I hope so," replied Nenette. "These patterns hanging here are to be shown for sale at the Easter fair, at the stall of Pierre, the hawker; and this one that I am making now is the richest, and, I think, the prettiest, for I have taken pains with it. It is almost too good to wear, but it will do to show."

She held it up in her hand, and Hendrich surveyed

it attentively, and said "she was quite an artist." Nenette laughed, and said not many would allow her such a title for having made a pretty pair of slippers.

"But they should, Nenette," replied Hendrich; "for an artist is one who knows how to make with his hands an image of the beauty in his mind; and this also is an art-work."

"So, if I make a pretty design you will give it the same name as those statues of the saints and angels, and the beautiful pictures that I have seen in the museum!"

"The rose may be called a rose, and the daisy a daisy," replied Hendrich; "and yet each will be called a flower." Nenette looked up and wondered to hear him speak like this; but she understood him.

After that, they became as two friends who have known one another a long time; for Hendrich continued to work there. Sometimes there were other workmen with him, and then he only said "Good day, neighbour;" but when he was alone he gossiped with her often as before. He talked to her of his native town of Holstbroe, on the Store, where his old mother lived; and described so well his home, that Nenette knew it, with its inmates, as if she had been there.

"I would have liked to stay with my mother all her life," he said one day; "but mine is a vagabond trade. I have worked in many great cities, and spent my life in wandering. There is no home for me."

"What a good man Hendrich the mason is, mother," said Nenette, one night as they sat together in the room below. "I never knew any one who talked like he.

A child can understand him; and yet there is a great deal in what he says, as there is in a child's saying sometimes. It is beautiful to hear a strong man talk as he does."

The fair-time came; and the stall of Pierre with Nenette's slippers looked as gay as any on the Boulevard. The first day was an anxious one for the widow and her daughter. They had walked through the fair at noon, but nothing had been sold then; and in the evening they expected Pierre to bring them the news of the day's fortune; and he came as they expected. Pierre had previously determined that they should not anticipate the news which he brought, and tried to look neither grave nor gay. Nenette met him on the threshold, and asked impatiently "how he had thriven." But Pierre entreated her "to give him breathing time;" and flinging himself in a chair, said "he had never had such a fatiguing day in his life." The widow knew Pierre's habit, and that it was useless to press him to tell his news, while he had determined to keep his audience in suspense; so she set his supper before him, and listened patiently to his account of the fatigues of the day, till, at length, he came to the fact, that he had sold the greater part of Nenette's work. "And what is stranger," he added, "the best pair of slippers, which was to hang there to be looked at, was the first thing I sold."

Nenette's cheek turned crimson, as she asked if he knew who had bought that pair.

"A stranger," replied Pierre. "He bought

nothing else; but gave me the price I asked, and took them away."

She did not dare to ask him if he spoke with a foreign accent; but the conviction, or rather the hope, that it was Hendrich became stronger as she thought upon it; and out of this fancy grew other fancies no less pleasing, as she sat with her mother that night. There was a pleasure in the thought, that it was he to whom they were indebted for their prosperity, and that he was constantly watching to aid and protect them in secret, far greater than if he had openly befriended them—a pleasure akin to the faith that some invisible power is always with us, watching over us alone, and guarding us from evil, even while we sleep. Now, like a magic tree, this thought put forth new branches, and clothed itself in leaves and blossoms. The stranger who had followed her so often by night without harming her could be none but Hendrich, who, knowing that she went alone, had taken that way to protect her; he it was who had watched for her in the church porch; he it was who, following at a distance, had seen her brother Phillipe stop her, and thinking that it was a stranger who had molested her, had come up and released her. How, in the worst days of their privation, he had helped them by his purchases in the shop, she knew, and that there was a blessing on his money, so that every silver piece had turned to gold. "How different from all other men he is," she thought, "for some are grave, and some are cheerful, but Hendrich can be both by turns. He works and sings; he talks wisely and

kindly; he does good for others secretly, not only with his money, but by active kindness, and looks for no reward." Thus, in her pure imagination, he became the type of a perfect man, and she came to reverence him more than she knew herself.

Nenette was not surprised, the next morning, to find that the scaffolding was gone, for Hendrich had told her that their work was nearly done there; but she missed his "Good day, neighbour," and felt dull that day. The next day was Sunday, but she did not see him in the church, though very early in the morning after, she saw him walking down the street, as she was standing at the shop-door. She saw that he did not wear his working-dress, except his cap of black velvet, and his belt, in which he thrust his tools sometimes when at work.

"Good morning, Nenette," said Hendrich, as soon as he came near to her. "I was awake before you this morning. An hour ago I passed here, but the shutters were not open."

"It was only half-light in my bedroom, when I rose," replied Nenette. "You are walking early."

"Yes; I leave Rouen this morning. I came to bid you farewell. My work is done in the church, and I go back to Holtsbroe, after five years' absence."

"You will want to see my mother? She will be come downstairs presently."

Hendrich said he would not go till he had seen her, and came into the shop and sat down. Nenette dusted the shelves again and again, and wished that her mother

would come; but she was later than usual that morning. She felt that she could not talk with Hendrich as before. She did not dare to say much, lest her voice should fail. She busied herself with her task, and only answered him briefly when he spoke to her. She knew that her movements were awkward, and she felt vexed with herself. Once or twice she thought to look him boldly in the face and make some remark, that would show unconcern, but her courage failed her every time. It was a relief when her visitor began to hum a tune, for she did not feel compelled to speak then. She would say something about old Esther. No; about the fair. But that would be inviting him to speak of the slippers. Then suddenly changing her mind, at a point where Hendrich seemed to be wholly engrossed by the air that he was humming, she said, while dusting one of the drawers more busily than ever;

"You will then never come back to France?"

"I do not know," he replied. "After a holiday at home, I must look for work again and go wherever I may find it."

There was nothing forced in his tone. Its indifference seemed so natural, that Nenette could not help feeling hurt. She knew then what hopes she had cherished, and remembered of what matter her dreams had been, and she felt humbled in her own thoughts. She strove hard to think proudly about it, lest the tears should come into her eyes. "Shall he see me crying, and pity me?" she thought, striving to imagine strongly

how humiliated she must feel in such a position. But at this moment she heard her mother's footstep on the stair.

Hendrich remained with them some time, talking of the widow's prospects for the next winter, and at length rose to bid her farewell. "You will not fail to prosper now, Nenette," he said as he kissed her cheek on the threshold. "Such goodness as yours will not go any longer unrewarded."

"We have lost a good friend in the Danish mason," said the widow when he was gone.

Nenette made no answer, but went up to her chamber and shut herself in there alone until noon.

IV.

All the summer months Nenette worked alone in her room from early morning till night. She never took her embroidery-frame now to sit and work in one of the public gardens in the city, as was the custom; and as she herself had always done before. She said, "It would not do to lose time now; the winter was coming, and though they were not so poor as before, the lesson of the last year must not be forgotten." Her brother Phillipe had not molested them, and her store of money increased. In the autumn there was another fair held along the Boulevards, beginning on the Sunday, called the *Fête des Morts*, and lasting for three days. For

this Nenette spent nearly all her capital in buying materials for slippers; and when the time came, she sold them all as before; but this time the richest pair, which were only meant for show, came back unsold. Nenette was glad of this in her heart, for she still felt a pleasure in her first belief, that Hendrich had bought them before, and taken them with him as a keepsake. She was more cheerful than usual that day. It was at the beginning of November; but the leaves fall late in Normandy, and the weather was then fine and warm. The widow did not often go out; but her daughter persuaded her to walk with her a little way, and ended her hesitation by putting on her cap with her own hands. Bonnets were then unknown in Rouen; and although Nenette, having a taste of her own, had adopted the little cap of the Parisian work-girl, her mother clung to the traditional costume of the country. Age and weakness had bent her a little, but she was taller than her daughter; and the grotesque Norman cap added something to her height. She wore wooden *sabots;* and her stockings of blue worsted, knitted with her own hands, were like a network of fine meshes under her short gown. Over her shoulders she wore a large cape of plain, white linen, stiffly starched; and over this, a long chain of pure gold, strung through an old silver coin, a locket, and a jet cross, which reached to her waist. In her ears she wore earrings in the form of parallelograms, also of pure gold, plain and heavy. Most women of her country wear these trinkets, many of which have descended to them through many genera-

tions. Others have been purchased by years of economy, and are held equally sacred. Whence are found in the Place du Cathedral, and other parts of Rouen, long rows of jewellers' shops as dazzling as any upon the Boulevards of Paris. Nenette had none of these gauds, but she was vain enough to exchange sabots and knitted hose for a pair of shoes and clean white stockings; and the white cape, which, as well as her mother, she had worn when a child, for a cape of the light-blue linen of which her dress was made, making, with her cap of blonde, a toilet which, in spite of all the revolutions of taste, would not excite ridicule if she could be seen in it in these days, walking at noon in the streets of Paris.

They walked slowly down the straggling street, stopped at every corner by some one who knew the widow and her daughter. Most expressed surprise to see them walking abroad; all spoke kindly to them, though few knew how worthy they were of kind words, beyond the fact that they were poor and industrious. They soon came to the fields, and walked along the road in the direction of Eauplet. Beside them rose the lofty range of hills towards Bloville, with its woods still thick with leaves; and across the river the flat meadows stretched out leagues away, with cattle grazing. They stayed at a little cabaret by the roadside, to drink some wine and eat the dinner they had brought with them; coming back into the city a little after sunset. This was Nenette's first and last holiday that year. The winter set in soon after, and

all the ancient many-angled houses were covered with snow, and the snow lay deep in the streets.

One night the widow and her daughter were sitting together in the room behind the shop. It was late, and they were about to retire to rest. The widow had fastened the door. It was a dark night, and the snow was falling when she had looked out. A heap of snow, that had accumulated on the threshold, fell into the shop when she opened the door. Nenette still lingered, warming her hands over the embers, when they heard a tapping upon the shutters, and both stood still to listen. They did not hear it again; and the widow said, "It was perhaps the watchman as he passed." But Nenette knew that the watchman always cried the hour; and she went to the shop door and inquired who knocked.

"Hush!" replied a voice without. "I need not say my name; you know my voice."

"It is Phillipe!" exclaimed the widow. "The door must not be opened. He comes, perhaps, to murder us."

"I came to bid you farewell," said Phillipe; "but I dare not stand to talk here. If the door is not opened I must begone."

Nenette did not wait for her mother's consent; but opened the door and Phillipe entered. She shut the door behind him, and shook the snow from his clothes. He was so changed in appearance that Nenette would not have known him in the street. He wore a workman's belt and linen blouse, and looked neat and clean

The widow shrunk from him, when he advanced towards her, but Nenette went and leaned upon his arm.

"It was always so," said Phillipe. "Nenette, speaking kindly to me, has touched me many a time with shame, because I knew how little I deserved it; but you, mother—your harshness made me harder than I should have been."

"Harshness!" replied the widow. "Who could love Nenette, and be otherwise than angry against you? None know, but Nenette and myself, what she has suffered through you."

Phillipe sat in a chair, and bending forward covered his face with his hands. The widow went over to him, and took him by the arm.

"I go away to-morrow," said Phillipe. "Many months ago the kindness of a stranger put me in the way to gain my living, and since then I have been another man. But I cannot live in secret like a thief all my life because I have once offended against the law. I have thought sometimes to give myself up to take my punishment and begin life anew. But there is no mercy for political offences. The friend who helped me before has found me out again, and by his help I hope to get away to-morrow night, perhaps never to return to France."

There was a full reconciliation between the widow and her son that night before he left. She was to see him no more; but Nenette arranged to meet him the next night, to bring some articles necessary for his voyage,

and to bid him again farewell at a little creek in the meadow, just outside the city, on the Dieppe road, whence one of the small vessels trading on the Seine was to convey him to Havre.

Nenette set out the next night with her bundle, exactly as the clock was striking eight. She was reminded of the nights in the previous winter, when she had started in like manner to take home her work; and she almost expected again to see her strange pursuer, watching for her in the church porch. The snow had ceased to fall, and it did not lie deep on the ground, but it made the streets silent, and once or twice she ventured to look back; but no one followed her. She had some distance to walk, and she chose a circuitous way, where the streets were less frequented. She was not discouraged, but felt herself more than ever a woman under her new trial; and she hastened on, only anxious for the success of Phillipe's plans, for she knew that he could not lead a better life while in his own country. She saw the dark shape of a vessel across the meadow, though she could not see the water from the roadway. A by-road led down from the ship-builder's yard to the wharf, where it lay. The shipwrights, in landing wood from a vessel in the creek, had trodden down the snow, which would have been over her ankles in the meadow.

There was no one on the deck of the vessel when she came to the creek. Its sides grazed the wharf with the movement of the tide, and a little funnel was smoking near the tiller. She gave no sign of her being there,

but waited awhile till a man came up from below, with a lantern. He called to her by name, and she knew that it was Phillipe, and answered him. Phillipe placed a plank from the vessel to the shore, and taking her by the hand, guided her aboard.

"God bless you!" said Phillipe, kissing her fervently. "You should not have come here alone if I had been a free man; but such as you are in better hands than mine."

Nenette only answered that she did not fear, and strove hard to keep from crying. "I have brought you some few things in this bundle," she said. "There was no time to make you anything, but I have done what I could."

The men were hauling up the mainsail, and the vessel was preparing to depart, when some one came up from the cabin, and Phillipe brought him to Nenette, saying he was the friend to whom he was indebted for his prospect of a happier life. The light of the lantern was turned from him, but Nenette knew him instantly, and exclaimed—

"Hendrich!"

"Yes; Hendrich."

"We thought you were far away from Rouen," said Nenette. She was much agitated, and scarcely knew what she had said.

"I came back to France only yesterday," replied Hendrich; "and learning the danger in which your brother was, I would not rest a moment till I had extricated him."

"You will take my sister home in safety?" said Phillipe, as soon as they had taken their farewell, and stood upon the wharf.

Hendrich promised that he would; and Nenette stood there leaning on his arm, while the vessel was loosened from her moorings, and began to sail slowly down the creek. When it floated into the river, they could still see the lantern on the deck for some time. When this was gone, Nenette burst into tears. Her companion did not interrupt her, but led her back gently across the meadow, the way that she had come.

"We have a long walk, Nenette," said Hendrich, as soon as she had dried her tears; "but I have much to say to you to-night." He waited awhile, but Nenette was silent, and he continued,—"I am going to talk to you of old times. I must go back to the time when I first came to Rouen, in order that you may understand what I am going to say. At that time, when I knew you only by sight, I learned much of your history from old Hester. I grew interested in you. I learned how you went by night to the slipper-dealer's; and I thought that it was dangerous for a young girl to traverse the streets so late alone; and it seemed to me only a kind thing, and such as any man might do, to watch you secretly, and be near you, in case of harm coming to you."

"And it was you who parted my brother from me!" exclaimed Nenette. "Now I think of how frightened I was at times with the conviction that some one fol-

lowed me, it seems to me very foolish. When no harm came to me night after night, I might have known that it was no one who wished me ill."

"I did not know whether you noticed me; but sometimes I fancied that you did, and being afraid of frightening you, I changed my place of watching, or kept further away, though I never omitted to watch till you ceased to go out at night. When I struck Phillipe, I thought that it was a stranger who molested you; but when he told me he was your brother, I let him go. Afterwards, I met him again, late at night, and he told me his history,—for he had been drinking as before. For your sake and your mother's sake, I counselled him to change his way of life, and got him work; but I did not know till yesterday why he kept concealed."

"Poor Phillipe," said Nenette; "I knew that he might become a different man. O Hendrich! what do we not owe to you!"

"I will not have you talk of owing anything to me," said Hendrich; "when I have ended, you must put aside all such thoughts, and answer me freely, as if none of these things had happened. That day when I parted with you in the shop to go back to my native place, I might have known that I should return. I might have known how deeply I loved you; for why did I treasure up the little necklace that you had worn, and why did I purchase at the fair the pair of slippers that I saw you making at the window when I worked upon the scaffolding outside the church, and look upon them as more precious than anything a thousand times their value? Nay, I knew it; but knowing also the

wandering life I led, I thought myself unfitted for you; and I would not seek to take you from your mother in her old age. I kept my secret and deceived myself, thinking I could make the sacrifice. But I have not ceased to think about you since, and now you see me again in Rouen. To-morrow I may sign a contract for work in the church of St. Ouen that will last a year or two. Whether I sign it or go away again from France for ever depends on you."

Nenette had hung down her head while he had been speaking; but she looked up when he had done, and answered,—"I have no shame before you, Hendrich. You are so wise; and good, that I do not fear to tell you that I have loved you also. What woman would not love you as much as I do? Another day I will tell you more, and you will know how happy you have made me."

It was late now, and the streets were deserted. Hendrich kissed her on the forehead, but they did not speak again till they reached the widow's home. Nenette told her mother what had passed, except what Hendrich had said to her; but her companion told the rest.

Early the next year Nenette became the wife of Hendrich, and they lived together still in the old house. Long after, when the widow died, she was buried in the cemetery of St. Maclou, a long way from the church on the eastern side of the city, and Hendrich carved a memorial-stone for her with his own hands. Afterwards, Nenette left the city with Hendrich, and lived with him in Holtsbroe.

THE GOLDEN RAM.

I.

Nearly two centuries ago, my ancestor, Roger Day, purchased of the Fishmongers' Company of London a certain "close," or piece of land, called "Ufford's Acre," in the town of Holt, in Norfolk. He erected upon it, soon afterwards, a spacious building for the better carrying on of his business of a brewer; in which he continued to brew and make money till he died. By his will, he gave to his eldest son the stock and premises of the brewery, and a small sum of money; dividing the rest of his property among his other children. This arrangement was scrupulously followed by every one of his successors, until my father, who was I believe the seventh proprietor of the "Golden Ram," succeeded to it about the beginning of the present century.

The "Golden Ram" had undergone but little alteration since the time of Roger Day; for buildings were made to last in his time. The elms beside the gateway were the same that he had planted. The crows who built their nests in a little square turret, with belfry

windows on all sides, through which the steam escaped, had taken up their abode there (as I know from an old picture of the place) long before his death. The high, solid, red-bricked front, facing the roadway, with cranes and warehouse-floors above, was just as he had directed it to be built. Over the gateway, where the farmers' carts backed in to load with grains, the massive beam was bent downwards with the weight that it had borne for two centuries. Just above this, my ancestor had caused a stone tablet to be let into the wall, bearing the date, "1656," a rude weather-worn carving of a ram, and the initials "R. D.," separated by a twisted ornament, such as is found on the title-pages of some old books. The red-bricked front of our house, which adjoined the brewery, had grown green and yellow with weather-stains and the crusts of a minute species of lichens; and the swallows, emboldened by long enjoyment of their privileges, built under rain gutters and ledges within arm's reach of the windows. Roger Day thought more of utility than beauty when he built the place; but there was no prettier object in our old town than the brewery of the "Golden Ram."

I was educated at Sir Thomas Gresham's Grammar School, in the town of Holt. I was an only child; and it was supposed that my father intended to bring me up to continue his business. Every one had told me that I was to be a brewer; and I knew the tradition of Roger Day's recommending that his successors should dispose of their property as he had done. But one evening, my father, being alone with me in his counting-

house, asked me "what profession I should like to learn?" I remember that I answered immediately, I would like to be a brewer; for I thought that he expected me to say so. But my father shook his head, and looked grave and thoughtful, and went on with the casting of some rows of figures.

"Anything but that, Ned," said he, as he closed his book. "The old tree is worn out, and will not bear fruit much longer. The brewery has been the support of our family for many years; but it will not last another lifetime. No occasion to cry, my boy. You'll do better than I have done, if you try."

"I would rather be in business with you, father," said I. "I should like to live here all my life."

"It can't be, Ned," said my father; "so make up your mind to that. You must expect a more active life than I have led. We are not compelled to live here till everything goes from us, because old Roger Day recommended us to carry on the business from father to son. I would that my father had thought so; but this old tradition has been accepted as if there was no help for us—no other way in the world but to follow it. A kind of slothful resignation has found its way into our very blood. It is time to get rid of this, and look abroad a little. Men were not made to stand still. Time changes everything about us; and unless we change, too, we become useless to our age."

I thought my father's language very strange. He had never spoken to me so seriously before. He sat with his arm resting on the book, without speaking, for

some time after that; while I stood at the opposite side of the desk, looking into his face, and wondered what it was that vexed him, for I thought there must be some secret which he had not told me. He rose at last, and bidding me follow him, led me through the brewery.

"Plenty of room here, Ned," he said, somewhat mournfully, as he opened the door of a grain-room, and looked in. "The rats don't have such a merry time of it as they did. Look at this floor," he continued, unlatching a wooden shutter, and letting in the daylight. "Note how it is sunk in about the middle, from the weight of the sacks of malt that used to be stored here in old times. In my great-grandfather's days, there would be sackfuls continually going up by the pulleys outside the house, to every floor. Look at our stock now!"

My father closed the door again, and went out with me.

I began to perceive his meaning; but I followed him in silence, for he seemed to be showing me these things more for the indulgence of his own humour than on my account.

"This is old Peter Day's great vat," said he—"the Blenheim Vat, as he christened it; for it was built in the Duke of Marlborough's time. It was in this same vat that John Edridge and Andrew Smith, two of his men, were killed by the foul air, after tapping its contents, having neglected to let down a lighted candle to try it before they went in. No need to let down a candle there now, I fancy. As many as seven persons have

sat down to dinner together in this vat, after drawing it off; but we have not had occasion for any such rejoicings as that for many a day. Listen!"

My father struck the side of the huge vat with the palm of his hand, and it gave a dull, hollow sound that impressed me with awe. "Quite empty, Ned," he continued, shaking his head, "and hung inside with a most mournful drapery of cobwebs."

"I recollect it being full once," said I.

"You were quite a child then. The last occasion was eleven years ago. You will never see that time again."

"Don't we brew at one time more than enough to fill this vat?" said I.

"Sometimes; we don't want such vessels now. But come along. The atmosphere here oppresses me. Don't you feel as if the old, dark, dusty place were stifling you?"

"No, father," I answered, much surprised at his question. "There seems to me quite a cool current of air just here."

"Come along!" repeated my father, holding me by the arm and not heeding my reply, "this way."

He mounted a ladder, and opening a low door, went out upon the roof of the brewery, where we could see the whole town, and the country round about. One of our men had made a kind of garden here on a small place on the leads, which he had filled with shrubs planted in the halves of old barrels. "This is old Baxter's garden," said my father; "it is not of much use to anybody up here; but he said he could not bear

to be idle. I was obliged to discharge him yesterday, poor fellow; he had been with me thirty years."

"Baxter used to carry me about when I was a child," I said.

"Why, yes," said my father; "I was sorry to part with him; they have all been good servants, but there is no help for it. I can't keep more than three men now, and I have a hard matter to find employment for them. Sit down here, and let us talk about this. You see, Ned, our business is not as it used to be. It has been dwindling away these hundred years past. Other breweries have been established in towns round about, and their proprietors have been more active to push a trade than we have been. The Days never had much energy; we have been content to go on in the old way, to depend upon old customers without seeking for new, until our connection has almost died out. We have become a byword among the new firms for being out of date in everything."

"But can't we do as they do?" I interrupted; "can't we set to work, and do something to make our trade flourishing again?"

"Just what I said when I first succeeded to the business; for I, like you, clung to the place and dreaded going out into the world. But I deceived myself. It was not energy, but the want of energy, that made me linger here, instead of striking out a new path at once. It is too late. The business is dead already, and can never be revived. I have done much to save it. I have not let it go without a struggle; but there is some-

thing in the place itself against us. When did I succeed in anything I ever undertook? They say that when I had formed a project I did not follow it up. But they don't know what I have done. If they had been in my place, they could have done no other. No, Ned, I tell you it will not do to think of carrying on the old business. There is much of the nature of the Days in you too; but you must shake that off. This lack of self-reliance has been growing on us from generation to generation, and would bring us at last to ruin and beggary. I never knew this fact till lately; but I see it clearly now. For two centuries past we have been accustomed to find a home and business ready for us, till all those qualities of the mind that are brought out in a struggle with the world have perished in us, as our limbs would perish if we ceased to use them. Look at my brother John. When my father died he thought me fortunate to get the brewery, instead of being apprenticed to a surgeon, as he was; but who is the fortunate man now?"

"Uncle John said to me one day, that I should do better as a surgeon than by staying here, and he said he would offer you to take me as a pupil, but that he knew you had determined that I should remain in your business."

"If you would like to be a surgeon," said my father, catching eagerly at the idea, "I will write to London about it; but take your own time to consider, and do not speak to me about it till you are quite determined."

It was getting dark and cold before we descended

again. My father bade me keep secret from my mother what had passed between us, until my determination should be made.

II.

My father never seemed to me in health after that day. My mother spoke to me about him, and said that she was afraid that the business made him anxious, and that he had grown very reserved of late. I told him soon afterwards that I had resolved to take to my uncle's profession. It was determined that I should leave the Grammar School and start for London, as soon as my articles could be agreed upon. So in the winter of that year I bade my old home farewell, vowing in my boyish thoughts to be very studious and industrious, and imitate those great men who, by their single exertions, have restored the fallen fortunes of their families. Such vows must have been oftener made, I fancy, than the world has ever been aware of: but I made great progress in the first two years, and my uncle was well satisfied with me. My father's letters to me were mostly about the brewery—sometimes desponding, sometimes more hopeful, and hinting at schemes for stimulating the business into activity again. Once when I came home on a visit I found, to my surprise, that he had taken on several of our old hands again, and that everything about the place wore an air of business. My father was more cheerful. He spoke of some purchases of malt that he had made, and, walking with me through the brewery, showed me that he had converted the great Blenheim vat into a cis-

tern for water, and everywhere pointed out to me the new signs of life.

"I have better hopes of the trade, Ned," he said, "than I ever had. It was more capital that I wanted; but I have got that now and I can serve my customers cheaper than ever. Baxter is to travel about the country for orders, and he is very sanguine. Wait a year or two, and, if I am not mistaken, you will find things have taken a happy turn. You will stay, of course, with your uncle, and follow your profession, when your articles have expired."

"I think it would be better," said I; "I have no desire to be a brewer now."

"I am not quite sure of that," said my father, as if piqued by my ready acquiescence. "You might perhaps find it worth while to return to the old business after all. My great-grandfather made forty thousand pounds in this old place, and we have space for a much larger business than his."

My father had at this time become very intimate with a Mr. Wrothesley, a banker in our town. I knew him and his family very well. His son, Charles, was a school-fellow of mine, and his daughter used to come to the brewery sometimes with her father. The son was of a proud disposition, and of a temper that made him both hated and feared among the boys at school. We had never been companions; indeed I believe he made no acquaintances in the school. I had heard that he had once spoken contemptuously of me on account of my father's business, which gave me perhaps a greater dislike to him than the

others felt. This son, I knew, was now engaged in the banking-house. I met him sometimes in the street; but he always passed me haughtily, and affected not to know me. I told my father of this, but he endeavoured to excuse him.

"Say nothing against the Wrothesleys, Ned," said he; "they are the best friends I have. They have saved me from ruin."

I did not understand these words at the time. I met the old banker soon afterwards walking with his son, and he spoke to me this time, though with restraint, as if the presence of the old man alone compelled him to recognise me. I visited at their house after that, where the banker often pressed me to come. He told me that he had seen my uncle's letters to my father, and complimented me on my application to my new profession. My holiday was longer than usual this time, and I became a constant visitor at the banker's house. The father would send up for me in the evening when I failed to go, and would tax me good humouredly with my neglect. The son was rarely one of our party, for he had a friend in our neighbourhood who had returned from college for a vacation, and with whom he was an inseparable companion on such occasions. Ellen Wrothesley, the banker's daughter, was always there, as well as the chief clerk, who lived in the house. We played forfeits; and sometimes the banker would tell stories of old times connected with banking. The daughter sang now and then, accompanying herself on the pianoforte; and the old man, although he acknow-

ledged that he had no taste for music, would listen with great gravity and attention. I began to feel a kind of affection for the banker, and as my time drew near, I became more and more unwilling to give up those cheerful evenings at his house. One night I told them I was about to return to London on the following day.

"We would all desire your stay," said the old man, "but we know your uncle cannot do without you. Let us hope you will not forget us before next holiday."

"Indeed I shall not, sir," said I; "never did I go away with more regret."

"I am sure we shall all miss you," said Ellen.

"I do not know how it is that we, who are such old neighbours, have not come together more," said the banker. "We have lived a little too secluded here."

The worthy old banker shook my hand cordially when I left that night.

I saw the daughter at his window early on the following morning, as I passed there on my way to the coach. The sharp, intelligent little child that I had known in my boyhood had grown into a maiden so timid and retiring, that I had scarcely made friends with her yet. But now, as I walked on, I thought with pleasure of the next holiday, when I should visit her in the character of an old friend, and no one would feel any more restraint than if I had lived there all my life. I felt strongly tempted to return and say that, having seen her at the window, I would not pass without bidding her good-bye again. But on consideration, I perceived that my conduct might be misconstrued. The

banker was believed to be much wealthier than my father, and notwithstanding his kindness to me I had not forgotten the old feeling of respect with which I had been accustomed to regard his family. Ellen Wrothesley, I knew, could be no match for me—the heir of a bankrupt business, with nothing but head and hands, except a determination to struggle with the world which had yet to be tried, and which I sometimes doubted myself, when I thought of my father's words. Nevertheless, I found a pleasure in thinking of the banker's daughter, in speculation upon whether I should find her much changed when I came back, and whether it would be long before I should have gained such a position in life as to make her not so far above me as she seemed then.

I had never felt much confidence in my father's hopes of reviving his business; and his letters, sanguine at first, soon began to show that I was right. The travelling scheme of Baxter, he told me, had not succeeded as he expected. He had made some unfortunate speculations—"his health was not good," he said, "and he could not attend to the business as he wished—nothing ever prospered with him." His accounts of the business and the state of his health became more and more serious, till one day I received a letter in my mother's handwriting with the news that my father was dangerously ill. Next morning I started for home. It was in the winter time, and I arrived at Holt late at night. The farmer's cart, in which I came from Norwich, left me a little way from the town, and I proceeded on

foot. Our house stood on the other side of the town, and as I walked through the main street I heard voices at a distance, and the footsteps of some one approaching me. As they came nearer I recognised the banker's voice, as well as that of his daughter.

"He will not be here till to-morrow," said the banker.

"Poor fellow!" said his daughter.

"Mr. Wrothesley," I said as we met, "pray, tell me the truth, how is my father?"

"Very ill, my dear friend, I am sorry to say, very ill; and Ellen has been with your mother all day, and we have been waiting there, thinking you would come to-night. Good bye; we will not keep you now. Ellen shall come to you in the morning and do what she can."

I scarcely waited to bid them good night, but hastened on till I came to the brewery. My mother opened the door.

"He has just been asking for you, within this hour past," she said. "The doctor thinks him a little better, and has now left him for the night."

My mother led the way upstairs into the sick-room.

"Hush!" she said, "he is asleep."

I took the candle from her, and holding aside the bed curtains, watched him for a moment, and then sat down to wait till he awakened. Some hours passed thus before he spoke. He asked in a weak voice for my mother, but she had left the room, and I begged him to tell me what he wanted.

"Ned," said he, without betokening any surprise at finding me there, "I have been lying here a long time, thinking about the brewery. If I could get a little more money, we would have the great vat filled again. It will not do to give up the struggle yet. Was not Wrothesley here just now?"

"He was here some hours since, father," said I. "He is gone now."

"Wrothesley must get me more money," he continued. "I don't like to apply to him again, but how am I to pay him what I owe already, if the brewery does not work better?"

"Pray, do not think of the brewery now, father," I replied, trying to soothe him.

"I have been much harassed of late, Ned," said he, "more than I have told you. You shall know all by-and-by."

He fell asleep again after that, and spoke no more till daylight. From what he said, I learned, for the first time, the secret of the changes which I had noticed some time before. I had no doubt, now, that he had borrowed a sum of money from the banker, in the hope of improving his business and repaying him; and that it was the failure in this which had weighed upon his mind. I hinted this to my mother afterwards; but I saw that she knew nothing of it. The old banker visited him every day, and his manner was always kind and soothing. Sometimes I fancied that my father's mind must be wandering when he spoke to me, for he would often talk incoherently afterwards;

but the fact that he had revealed explained too well the circumstances of the last twelve months, for me to doubt it. Ellen Wrothesley stayed with my mother every day till night, when her father came to take her. And so we went on for a fortnight, when my father's complaint began to increase. He had never spoken again on the subject of the brewery; but one night I heard him muttering, as before, about the great vat and the fortune that Peter Day had made. I put my ear down to listen, but his voice grew fainter, and he sighed. He never spoke afterwards. Soon after the doctor had gone he sighed heavily again, and then lay so quiet and motionless that my mother, knowing more of death than I did at my age, burst into tears, and Ellen Wrothesley led her out of the room.

III.

I thought long and anxiously about the future that night. I had still a year to serve to my uncle, and I did not know exactly the state of my father's affairs, nor how far it might be practicable to carry on the business. I thought that my father had but few debts, except the money that he had borrowed of the banker, which I knew was considerable. On the day of the funeral I spoke to him about it; and begged him to tell me the sum which he had lent.

"Your father's estate owes me fifteen hundred pounds," he said, "which is secured, with interest at four per cent., on the stock and premises of the brewery.

But do not let this trouble you. I hope I shall not be in want of my principal for a long time to come. Things may go better before then. Baxter, I am sure, could manage the business, and make it more profitable than it has been."

"Our family have lived here for many years," I said; "and though I would not ask you to forego one sixpence of your credit, I should feel deeply grateful for an opportunity of repurchasing our home. Till then, I must consider it as yours; and that we hold it only by your favour."

The whole of the next month was devoted to placing my father's affairs in order. After frequent deliberations with Baxter, it was resolved that he should continue to manage the business for my mother. We had still many of our old customers—chiefly wealthy families and farmers in the county. With these, I found it would be possible to pay the interest of the banker's debt, and leave such a sum as, with economy, would suffice for my mother's support. For the repayment of the principal, I could look to nothing but my own energy and good fortune. I knew that it might be many years before I could accomplish this; but I did not doubt of being able to do it, if the banker gave me time, as he had promised.

"At the worst, mother," I said, when I parted with her to return to London, "we can give up the old place. "My labour, if it will not pay off this debt, will suffice to keep us both; so do not be anxious about the future. And if I leave you now, with no one to keep

you company except old Margaret, and do not come home so often as before, remember that this purpose is before me night and day; and that I cannot spare time for aught else."

I bade the banker farewell, before I left there; but I carefully avoided seeing Ellen again. If, a year before, I thought myself poor in comparison with her, how much further did she seem removed from me now? Some years must elapse before I could pay off the debt which my father had contracted; and, even then, I should be no nearer to my object than I had seemed before. How could I reasonably hope against all this? I resolved to banish her, if possible, from my mind—to shut out from my thoughts everything but this one purpose of freeing my home from the debt that hung over it. The banker might die; and the son, who would be his heir, would, I knew, show me little favour. "I must therefore lose no time," I thought; and so, with a kind of fanaticism, I even denied myself enjoyments that would in no way have hindered my design at that time. I grew greedy of money, and miserly, even to the hoarding of pence. The object of my life seemed to me to justify all—to exempt me from every other claim upon my sympathy. Such claims seemed to me like strange voices tempting me to stop, when I had sworn to go on. I would not listen to them. True or false, had I not also my burden to bear? perhaps greater than theirs who ignorantly thought me more fortunate than themselves; differing, perhaps, only from them, inasmuch as I bore

my trouble patiently, and asked for no one's commiseration or advice. Some, I knew, who had learned the secret of my savings, and would have taken from me a portion of them, had been idlers, spendthrifts, men who never dreamed of self-denial while they had money. The poverty that they pleaded to move my pity was not worse in its effects than what I willingly endured. How, then, could I feel for them? Had they always been generous and full of sympathy for others—having no duty like mine to harden them to all else? I knew they had not. In the height of their prosperity—let them have what they would—they never had more than enough. They fancied ever that they had too little to give; that the more fortunate must spare something. They never dreamed of depriving themselves of one object they chose to consider necessary. They had not gone, as I had been accustomed to go, ill-clad in winter, and in summer sometimes in clothes ridiculously unsuitable to the season, because I happened to have no others, and would not buy more. I lived at that time in a back street, near the hospital, in the Borough; a narrow, gloomy turning, with only one outlet, and constantly filled with smoke, beaten down by the wind from a low factory chimney in the neighbourhood. I had gradually given up the friends and acquaintances I had made before my father died, and my life was dull and hard enough; but I bore up against it, and thought sometimes, with pride, how my father had mistaken me, when he charged me with wanting energy of purpose.

But this way of life made me some enemies. I had never revealed, even to my uncle, the state of our affairs; nor did I ever hint to him my object in living so penuriously. He would rally me sometimes upon my miserly ways; and seeing at last that I persisted in them, he spoke to me seriously of the difference between a moderate degree of care, and that avarice which he said was unnatural in a young man. My uncle was a good-hearted man, and if I had told him the truth he would, I believe, have commended me; but I felt only the injustice of his remarks, and was unreasonably angry with him. So we quarrelled, and scarcely spoke to each other till the end of my term. I passed my examination, and having some capital, I purchased the small business of a retiring surgeon in London.

My father had now been dead three years, and I had only returned to Holt twice during that time. Travelling was expensive then, and I had no time to spare. Each time I had only stayed a few days, and had gone away again without seeing any of the Wrothesleys. On the last occasion, my mother told me that they had treated her coolly of late. The gossip of the town told of great changes at the banker's. The son had returned from Germany, where he had been staying, more proud and extravagant than ever. Parties were given at the banker's house, to which all the wealthiest residents in the neighbourhood were invited, and it was said that the son was the real host on such occasions, and that he had gained a complete ascendancy over the banker

in all his affairs. The son was becoming somewhat notorious in the county. I saw his name frequently in the local newspaper, as making speeches at meetings and public dinners, and as connected with a plan for improving the harbour of a town on the coast, and other schemes. One evening I was sitting in the surgery alone, when I heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs in the street, which seemed to cease at our door, and a moment afterwards I learned that a stranger desired to speak with me. It was Charles Wrothesley. I did not recognise him till he spoke, for he looked many years older than when I had seen him last, and he wore a moustache.

"I have had considerable trouble to find you, Mr. Day," he said. "I could meet no one who knew of a surgeon of your name in this neighbourhood."

"Probably not," I answered. "I know no means of making myself known but patience and industry." My visitor looked a little disconcerted. He tapped his foot lightly with his riding-whip, and without looking up, said—

"My father begged me to call upon you while in town, upon a matter of business: women do not understand these things, or he would have spoken about it to your mother. I believe you have the management of her affairs?"

"I presume it is in connection with your father's mortgage upon the brewery?" I said.

"Yes; in connection with our mortgage. My father has just now in view a most advantageous invest-

ment for money; in short, he would be glad to know if he may expect that the mortgage will be soon paid off."

"Mr. Wrothesley," I said, "I will tell you the truth. I am at present quite unable to pay this sum. I had hoped, from your father's kindness, that he would have been satisfied for some time to come with the regular payment of the interest. In a few years I might be able to redeem our property, which has been the dearest object of my life. But if your father insists upon this, there is no help for it. The place must be sold."

"I suppose there is no other encumbrance?" he inquired.

"None."

"I have been looking at the old place lately," he said, yawning, and stretching himself in his chair with a forced air of unconcern. "I have been over it, and it strikes me that it would bring, with the stock, much more than our debt, and leave, perhaps, a considerable balance for your mother. Now they tell me that it does n't pay as a brewery—that the trade is all gone, and that only a proprietor with large capital would have any chance of making it flourish again. I should advise you to consent at once to a sale."

"I have already told your father," I replied, "that I considered we held our home only by his favour. The time appointed for the payment of his debt has long passed, and I acknowledge myself already much indebted for his forbearance. He will, of course, do with it as he pleases. I will ask only one more favour,

namely, that he will give me at least a month to communicate this to my mother, and to make arrangements for her leaving Holt."

My visitor readily assented to this, and took his leave with some formal apologies for pressing his demands.

IV.

I considered all my resources that night, saw the utter impossibility of preventing the sale of our old house, if the banker insisted on his debt. The purchase of my business had left me with scarcely a hundred pounds, and I had no friend of whom to borrow, except my uncle, with whom I had quarrelled. But I could not think that the banker could have so far changed in his sentiments towards me as to demand his debt so peremptorily. I know that it must be my old enemy, Charles Wrothesley, who had persuaded him to this; indeed I suspected that the father might as yet be ignorant of the step he had taken. I remembered his previous friendship for me; and though I thought that my ceasing to visit him without assigning any cause might have offended him, I could not believe that he would take this way of showing his anger. I resolved at least to see the father before communicating the matter to my mother, and shortly afterwards I returned to Holt for that purpose.

I called several times at the banking-house without being able to see Mr. Wrothesley. Sometimes he was absent, and at others his clerk brought me some excuse

for not seeing me. On another occasion, the son met me at the door, and haughtily demanded to know what was my business. I told him that I had come to learn from his father what he intended to do with my mother's property. His manner convinced me more strongly that he had an object in preventing my seeing him, and I told him that I would not return to London till I had accomplished my purpose. His face flushed with anger; he hesitated for a moment, but finally bade me sharply follow him. He led the way upstairs, and without announcing me opened the door of the drawing-room in which I had been accustomed to spend the winter evenings, and bade me enter. The banker was sitting in a low chair, with his head resting on his hand, looking at the fire as if in thought, for he did not hear us at first. Ellen, who was reading by a lamp at the table, rose at once and said, "Mr. Day, father." The old man started and stared at me, shading his eyes. He held out his hand to me, and seemed much agitated.

"Come! you know Mr. Day," said the son sharply.

"Oh, yes," he said; "I have not seen him for a long time; but I remember him. Sit down. I am very unwell to-night."

"In truth," said Charles Wrothesley, "my father's health has lately been such that he cannot bear the excitement of business. I hope you will not detain him long."

"I was not aware of Mr. Wrothesley's illness," I said. "I will not intrude upon him at present."

"Stay," said the old man, as I was preparing to depart. "I know what you come about, and would prefer that you should stay and settle it now. Ellen, leave us, my dear girl."

She came over to shake hands with me, and bade me good night in a voice so tremulous that I thought she knew my business, and felt compassion for us. She lingered some time lighting her candle, and when at the door glanced at me again with a look of anxiety. The altered manner of the banker, and the abruptness of the son, in that house where I had so often been a welcome guest, struck me deeply.

"I have not come to make any complaint, Mr. Wrothesley," I said, after a silence of some moments. "I merely desired to know when it will be necessary for us to give up possession of the brewery."

"I don't want to press you," he replied. "I have known your family many years. I thought it would be better for all parties, but I don't want to press you."

"I will wind up my mother's affairs as quickly as possible," said I, "so that you may proceed at once to a sale."

"Do not think I do this in anger," replied the father. "I desire that we should be still good friends, as we have always been. This sale will do you no injury. Your father told me the state of his business, I know that it is even worse now than then. Why, then, hesitate to give up what should have been given up years ago? Your father lost all there, and but for

his reluctance to take to some other pursuit, he would never have needed this money."

"The time for payment of your debt has been past several years," interrupted the son, who had been walking to and fro in the room during our conversation; "I am sure Mr. Day will feel that this step needs no apology."

"I *will* speak," said the old man. "Mr. Day shall know that this is no vindictive act on my part. I never in my life have wilfully oppressed any man, much less would I behave harshly towards the wife of my poor deceased friend. I tell you, that if I were not sure that this would benefit her I would wash my hands of the matter."

"My father is much excited to-night," said the son. "I knew this would be too much for him. Do you not see that he is extremely ill? It is cruel to trouble him with business matters at this time."

"Charles," said the banker, "I have desired Mr. Day to stay, and I will not be told that I am too ill to speak upon this matter. I am glad that he has come here to-night, and that he has afforded me an opportunity of explaining my motives. I know something of your career, Mr. Day, and of how meritoriously you have striven to redeem your home; though I think your object a mistaken one. Why burden yourself with this task, when all your energies are required to gain you a footing in the world? This sale will relieve you from a debt, and put your mother in possession of a sum of money of greater value to her than this

wreck of a business, which is worse than profitless."

"Perhaps you are right," I replied. "But it was natural to cling to a home which our family have held so long."

"A delusion, Mr. Day; and one that ruined your poor father. By-and-by you will think I have done well to arouse you from it. But whatever may be my motive for pressing this sale, do not believe that my determination had aught to do with ill-feeling, or with a greedy desire to get back my money."

"I will not do you such an injustice," I said.

"I cannot say more now," he continued. "I will talk to you again about this one day. Good night." I shook hands with him, and left him still sitting before the fire in the attitude in which I had found him. His son followed me out, and stopping me at the foot of the stairs, said, "My father cannot bear these scenes. You see he's no longer fit for business. He will soon retire from it altogether; but these affairs must be settled first."

"You will meet with no opposition on our part," I said, as I quitted him.

I had now become familiarised with the idea of abandoning our old home, and had begun to regard it with less regret than before. I felt that there was much truth in what the old banker had said; and I thought of what my father had suffered there, and of his half-superstitious belief in the connexion between his misfortunes and the traditions of the place. It was, indeed,

a relief to me, that some power, over which I had no control, was about to sever our connexion with it for ever. I told my mother what had passed at the banking-house, and brought her gradually to see that it was better to relinquish the place cheerfully, and to trust to my business, and to my efforts, now unshackled by this duty, for our support. In a short time we had finished the settlement of the affairs of the brewery, save the collecting of a few debts; and I gave notice to the banker that we were ready to give up possession. I received in reply a letter from Charles Wrothesley, thanking me for my promptness, and the Golden Ram was advertised for sale in the county paper. The old man called upon me one day, and walked over the brewery with me. His manner was strange and nervous. He told me that he had issued another advertisement, fixing the sale at an earlier day. We talked of what sum the place was likely to sell for; and he examined the stock and utensils with an eagerness which surprised me. He repeated to me frequently that the sale would benefit us all, and took his leave of me afterwards with something of his old friendship.

It was in the winter time, and it had been snowing that afternoon. In the evening I went to see Baxter, my mother's late manager, who lived at a short distance from the town, and I returned some hours after dusk. It was dark, and very cold that night, and the snow was beginning to fall slightly again. As I was crossing the road to our house I saw some one resting under the trees. It was a woman's form. I paused a moment,

and saw her pass and repass the house, looking up at the windows. The second time she stopped at the door, as if listening for some sound, and then walked on, and stood under the trees again. The snow on the ground deadened the noise of my footsteps, and she did not hear my approach till I came close to her, when she turned, and, after hesitating a moment, addressed me by name.

"Miss Wrothesley!" I exclaimed, for I recognised her voice.

"Hush!" she said, "I wish to speak to you—to you only. I have passed here several nights, but I had not courage to knock. It is so long since I have seen your mother that it would be painful to me to meet her now. Does she not wonder at my unkindness?"

"She cannot, indeed, guess the cause of this change," said I.

"It is not my fault," she said, earnestly. "I had scarcely a friend in Holt, save her; but I did not come to speak of that. Tell me if my father is not about to sell this house for a debt which your father owed him?"

"He is."

"I only learned this the other day, when I heard my father and my brother talking together. I knew that my father could not have told you why he had taken this step; and I knew also that in a short time you would have left Holt with the belief that he had harshly and wantonly refused your mother the continued possession of her home."

"I have never complained of your father," said I. "I

"I took her hand when she offered it."—Page 67.

am even convinced that it is a benefit to my mother to give up the brewery at once."

"I knew you would say this," she interrupted, "because you feel he has the right to do it; but I would not have you think that my father had used this right unkindly. I cannot tell you what I have learned by accident; but I come to entreat you to believe that he is driven to this step. I would I could say more, for I have much need of a friend just now; but I dare not. I can only beg you, if you guess my meaning, not to speak of it to any one. Do you promise me this?"

"You may trust me, Miss Wrothesley," I said. "I know the kindly motive that has brought you here to-night, and I will never speak of your visit to any person."

"Now, good night," she said. "I may, perhaps, never see you or your mother again, but it will be a consolation to me to think that you will not judge my father's conduct uncharitably."

I took her hand when she offered it, and held it in my own a moment, very loth to let her go. I knew by her manner that she had some trouble of which she would not speak to me; and I longed to beg her to tell me what it was, and to help her with my counsel or assistance. All my old affection for her returned in that moment. I felt tempted to tell her then the secret that I had kept for years—why I had concealed it, and how I had sought to repress my feelings until then. But the moment passed, and she was gone.

I had thought upon her words, and endeavoured to

trace in them the nature of the trouble she had hinted at. I suspected that it was her brother who had compelled her for some reason to cease visiting at our house; and that all her sorrow arose from his conduct. He it was, I knew, who had persuaded the father to demand his mortgage money; and I could not doubt that he had by some means attained to a domination in the banker's household, which enabled him to tyrannise over her also. I resolved to endeavour to ascertain the truth of this, and, if I failed, to see her again, and ask her directly to confide in me.

V.

The day of the sale was approaching, and the old banker came now almost every day to the brewery. Sometimes he was accompanied by the auctioneer, who marked the numbers of lots, as the banker directed him, upon vats and other things. At other times he came alone, and wandered about the place, as if restless and anxious for the sale to be past. The business was quite stopped now, and he had the keys, with which he would let himself in, and afterwards lock the doors on going away.

One evening, as I was walking in the garden at the back of our house, I noticed the light of a candle at one of the upper windows in the side of the brewery. The glass was patched and dirty, so that I could not see any object through; but I concluded that it was the banker there again. I lingered for more than an hour, and as

I was going in-doors I noticed the light still glimmering there. The light remaining in the same place so long struck me as remarkable; and I resolved to go into the brewery, and ascertain who was there.

I took no light with me. The little door cut in the great folding gates under the trees was open, and swinging to and fro. I entered there, closing the door behind me, and walked across the yard to another door, opening to a flight of stairs that led to the floor above. The staircase was very broad, and as I groped my way along the wall on one side, I fancied that some one had passed me in the darkness; for I heard a movement as if some person was descending behind me, without shoes on. I listened; and thinking I heard it still, I called aloud—

"Mr. Wrothesley!"

Immediately after, I heard the door at the bottom of the stairs shut to. I could not be deceived in this, although it might have been the effect of a current of air. I turned back, and, descending as fast as I could in the darkness, went out again into the yard. I called again, and looked about there, without seeing any one, till, finding the little door in the gate open, I remembered that I had shut it fast, and knew by this that some one must have passed through since me. I got through, and looked up and down the street; but I saw no one near, and I returned and felt my way up the stairs again. I found the candle that I had seen from without still burning in an iron candlestick hooked to the wall, as the men used to hang them when at work

there. Some one had lately removed the wick; for I smelt the snuff that was still smouldering on the floor. Beside the candlestick, I found the keys, that had been in the banker's possession. I took the light, and visited all parts of the brewery, searching everywhere, and calling out for a long time; but I found no one. Afterwards I went out, and locked the doors.

The circumstance was remarkable; but, on reflection, I became convinced that it must have been the old banker himself who had passed me so stealthily on the stairs. His eccentric manners and absent moods of late had induced me to suspect that his reason was becoming affected. I had known him do things almost equally unaccountable, and did not doubt that he would come again on the morrow, or the day after, and talk as if nothing remarkable had happened. On considering my position on the stairs, and endeavouring to recall the precise moment at which I suspected that I heard a footstep, I thought that he must first have heard me opening the door below, and having stood perfectly still upon the stairs until I had passed him, have begun immediately to descend again. Why he should do this, or why he should have hastened so precipitately to depart, on hearing me approach, as to leave his candle still burning, I could not imagine; but I determined, when he came to me again to ask for the keys, to endeavour to ascertain the motives of his singular conduct.

Several hours had passed after this. My mother had retired to rest, and I was lingering in our retiring-room reading alone, when I was startled by a loud knock at

the door. It was then near midnight; and we had rarely any visitors there, even at early hours. I took the candle, and, listening for a moment, demanded through the door who was there.

"It is I, Mr. Day," said the voice of Charles Wrothesley. "Pray, open the door at once."

I unfastened the chain, and, moving back the bolts, threw open the door. My visitor's face, as the light fell on it, looked pale and anxious.

"Is my father here?" he asked.

"I have not seen him to-day," I replied.

"He left home this afternoon, a little before dusk, and has not been seen since. I had hoped that he had been with you, or in the brewery. He is very rarely absent so late, and we are all anxious about him."

I bade him wait there a moment, while I went in and put on my hat; and taking a lighted lantern and the keys of the brewery, I went out with him, and shut the door gently, so as not to awaken my mother.

"This is very strange," I said. "Several hours ago, I found the door in the gate open; and, going upstairs discovered a candle burning, and no one there."

"Did you make no search? He might have been taken ill in some part of the place."

"I visited every room," I replied; "and called to him for some time."

"You heard nothing?"

A tremulous hesitation in his voice and manner at this moment instantly awakened a strange suspicion

in my mind; and I instinctively held my tongue upon the subject of the incident upon the stairs.

"I found no one," said I, "and could get no reply to my calls."

"Give me the lantern," he said, as I opened the door in the gateway, and we went in.

He walked round the yard, calling out his father's name, and then returned, and we went up the stairs together. He kept before me wherever we went, still calling, and turning the light of the lantern into dark corners.

"Let us look where you found the candle burning," said he. A thrill of horror passed through me as I saw him turn quickly towards the very place, and suddenly check himself. "Where was it?" he asked.

"This way," I said, taking the lead.

Something in his manner—an eagerness overacted, perhaps—or an evident propensity to search in many places before coming to this—or some other signs which I instinctively noted, impressed me with the feeling that, up to this point, his search had been insincere. We looked about in the room where I had found the candle. Seeing nothing, he paused a moment, and, looking me steadily in the face, said, "We must not give up the search while there is a hole unexamined."

On one side of this room there was a double row of oblong troughs let into the floor, in which the "wort" used to be left to cool. Some of these were half filled with water; but they were too shallow to drown any

one. My companion, however, walked across the planks laid over these, and examined them with the lantern, kneeling down. At the back of this place was a stone paved ante-room, with a water-pipe and tap, and a great vat, the rim of which was only a little above the floor. This had been used for a cistern; but it was only half filled with water. I had examined this before; but I lighted the candle at my companion's lantern and looked down into it again. I dropped in a piece of wood that I had found, in order to ascertain the height of the water; and, waving my light to and fro, could see the circles which it made upon the surface.

"What is that?" said my companion, pointing downwards.

Shading my eyes with my hand, I could see, by the additional light of the lantern, some dark object near the side. I took my handkerchief, and tying the corner of it round the candlestick, let it down as low as I could into the vat. My companion knelt at the same moment and stared in the direction he had pointed. Immediately afterwards, he sprang upon his feet, and ran from the place, at first calling aloud for help.

I felt sick and faint, and I dared not look into the vat again. I heard my companion open the door below, and go out. He did not call again; and I waited anxiously, thinking that he had resolved to seek assistance somewhere, instead of giving an alarm. The terrible suspicion that had entered my mind when on the stairs would not leave me. I walked out of the little room across the troughs again, and listened for his

return for some minutes. It was a dark night out of doors. I pushed the window back, and looked out. The bells of the church were ringing for some joyous occasion—dropping, and breaking out again, as the wind, which was blowing hard, brought a full peal, and then carried the sound away. A quarter of an hour seemed to me to have elapsed; and I resolved to go in quest of him. He had left the lantern upon the ground; and I returned to exchange my candle for it, in order that my light might not be extinguished by the wind when I passed into the yard. As I entered the little chamber again, something glittering on the ground, caught my eye. I stooped, and picking it up, found that it was a small, gold shirt-stud. I put it in my pocket, and was returning, to descend the stairs, when I heard footsteps below. I distinguished the voice of Charles Wrothesley, bidding some one hasten. Two men, who lived in the neighbourhood were with him, carrying ropes and a ladder. He looked pale and wild, and begged me to come with them, and witness their search.

I was too much occupied in watching the proceedings of the men to observe the countenance of Charles Wrothesley during their descent into the vat. I noticed, however, that he busied himself in assisting them; and that he never suggested any step, but let them precede him in everything. In a few moments the men brought up the body of the old banker, quite cold. One of the men remarked, that the water in the vat was scarcely sufficient to drown him.

"He must have fallen in suddenly," said Charles

Wrothesley. "Has he no mark of a bruise upon the head?"

He spoke in a firm voice, and seemed calmer; but he turned aside, and did not look upon the corpse.

"No, master; not a scratch," said the man, examining the body with the light.

"Mr. Day," said the banker's son to me, as he called me aside, "we have a deep interest in keeping our misfortune as secret as possible, for a few hours. The authorities must be apprised of this, of course; but we must be prudent. This is no suicide. Everything convinces me that it is the result of an accident. My father's affairs are not embarrassed; nor had he any trouble upon his mind, to make the supposition of suicide probable. I have the consolation to know that our house is perfectly solvent; but this event was, of course, unforeseen, and it would, if known, lead, no doubt, to a run upon us that no firm could withstand."

I made him no reply, but kept my eye fixed upon him.

"It is useless to give way to sorrow," he continued, as calmly as before. "I have my sister's interests to think of, as well as my own. This must be kept quiet, until it can be shown that my father has not destroyed himself. If we can do this, our house may be saved; but otherwise we are ruined. I trust to you to explain to these men, whom you know better than I do, the necessity of silence. I myself will go to Mr. Pratt, the magistrate."

"I will do my best to have your wishes complied with," said I; "but everything here must remain as it

is. The doors must be looked, and the keys must be in my possession."

"As you please," he said, shrinking slightly from my look, at last. "Let us go now."

It was some time after midnight when he left us. I fastened all the windows, and locked the doors; and having explained to the men the reasons for their keeping secret what they had seen, for a few hours, and promised them a reward, I let myself into our house again with a key, and found all silent there.

VI.

I did not go to bed that night. The excitement of these events had left me feverish and restless. The terrible suspicion that had struck me when searching in the brewery grew stronger as I recalled all the circumstances, up to the finding of the body. The footsteps on the stairs, evidently of some one who knew the place, from the rapidity with which he had been able to find his way out in the darkness and escape; the subsequent arrival of Charles Wrothesley himself, to inquire after his father; his catching at my account of finding the light; his clumsily acted search in every place before coming to the true one; but, above all, his sudden movement towards the room where I had found the light, when proposing to search there, although I had not yet told him the situation of this room, followed by his hastily turning and inquiring "where it was;" all seemed to me to point to him as a murderer. His proud and vindictive character, his known extrava-

gance, the harsh tones in which I had heard him speak to his father, and the mysterious changes in the banker's house during the last year or two, appeared to me all to have some connection with the fate of the old man. I had heard rumours that the son had lived on the Continent, and in London, in a style of great magnificence, and that the father had supplied him with large sums of money, until he refused to send him more, and insisted upon his return to Holt. I had always suspected that he had urged the sale of our property with the idea of getting a portion of the proceeds; and I fancied that the late Mr. Wrothesley might at last have repented of his determination, and, by showing some hesitation, have exasperated him. He knew the strange fancy of the banker for wandering about the old brewery; and the thought might easily have occurred to him, when brooding over the advantages which would result to him from his death, to follow him thither, and watch for an opportunity of murdering him, and disposing of the body in such a way that his death might appear to have been caused by accident. He might, I thought, have happened on this occasion to accompany him there, and finding himself standing with him near the edge of the great vat, have been seized with a horrible temptation to strike him down. This would account for no bruises being seen upon him; but I remembered the extraordinary fact of my having noticed the light in the same place for more than an hour before my curiosity was excited. What could he have been doing during this time, supposing my hypo-

thesis to be correct? And why should he leave the keys there, and the light still burning?

Though I could not answer these queries, the conviction that the old man had been murdered, and that the murderer was his own son, grew firmer in spite of myself. The gold shirt-stud, which I had forgotten until this moment, might, I knew, furnish me with a clue still surer than any I had yet discovered. I determined to endeavour to ascertain if the son had worn such a stud. If I learned that this had belonged to him, the spot in which I had found it would leave no doubt of his guilt. I should know then that he must have seized his victim on the brink of the vat, and that this must have been dropped, unperceived, in the struggle.

I sat before the fire for many hours, thinking over these things. I heard the watchman try the shutters several times, and then walk on, crying the hour, till I lost his voice and footsteps in the distance. I heard him cry four o'clock before I fell asleep, and began to dream confusedly of the events of the night before, mingled with the circumstances of my father's struggles to keep up the brewery, and of his unhappy end. Once I was in my old lodging in the Borough again, much troubled with the thought that I had neglected and lost my business, and been compelled to return to my previous life of solitude and privation. But all this changed suddenly, and I was standing in a great crowd in a court of justice. Several years before, I had once given medical evidence on a trial for murder, and all this was passing through my mind exactly as it had

happened, till I caught sight of the face of the accused, and saw, to my surprise, that it was Charles Wrothesley. Afterwards, I was standing in the street outside the court—Ellen was there, imploring me not to go in—till I suffered her to draw me along, and we began to hasten through by-streets in the rain, only anxious to get farther and farther away.

When I awoke, there was a little daylight in the room. I put back the shutters, and looking out saw the day dawning through slate-coloured clouds, with a very wintry look. The clocks in the town struck six, as I shut down the window again. I took my hat to go out and refresh myself in the cool morning air, when I heard a gentle tapping, as of some one's finger-nail upon the window pane. I hastened to the door, and to my surprise found Ellen Wrothesley there. She wore a thick veil, so that I could not see her face. Not doubting that she knew of the events of the night before, I motioned to her silently to enter; but she held me by the arm and begged me to walk with her. "She had much to say to me," she said. The calmness of her manner surprised me; but I closed the door gently, and walked with her through a lane beside the house.

"Mr. Day," she began, as soon as we had walked a short distance, "I am in great trouble. I know not what to do unless some friend will advise me. I am quite alone now." She wept; but I was convinced by her manner she did not know yet the extent of her misfortune.

"You can speak to me frankly, Miss Wrothesley," I said. "You have a firm friend in me. From this day I hope we shall know each other better. I have never dared to tell you how dear you are to me; but why should I hesitate now when this may give you confidence in me? To the utmost of my power I will protect you while I live."

"I will tell you everything," she said. "How I would that I had dared to do so before! But it is too late now. My father is ruined and fled. He went away last night. My brother told me he might never come back here; but he would not say where he is gone. Oh! I implore you to help me! I must find him; I must go to him."

"I knew of this," I said, striving to conceal my agitation. "You must be patient and believe that I am doing all I can to help you. It is not well that I should tell you all now."

"Mr. Day," she continued, quite hoarse with emotion, "my father is an old man; he cannot bear these things; he has been ill for some time. He will die in some distant place with strangers. I must go to him, and live with him. You do not, you cannot, know all. My brother has not dared to tell you that it is he who has ruined him and driven him from his home in his old age. I have borne much from him myself, and have not complained. I have given all that I possessed cheerfully to save my father's name: we are all ruined. But to let my father go away like this, a poor, weak, friendless old man, to wander dis-

graced and beggared,—oh! I cannot forgive him for this!"

I implored her again to trust in me to do all for her for the best; but she continued—"You do not know my father," she said. "He is gentle and affectionate, but he is proud; he will not be able to bear this disgrace. The thought of it alone has made him almost mad. I know what he has suffered. The hope of putting off this day by getting in a few debts has sustained him hitherto. This was why he urged you to sell your mother's property, and was so anxious for it to be done. Up to two days since he had hope; but he told me himself that everything had failed."

"When was this?"

"Only yesterday."

"Can you remember well all that happened at your house yesterday?"

"Everything. I have been so anxious and unhappy lately that not a movement in the place has been secret from me."

"Strive then to recollect at what hour your father left you: I have a purpose in wishing to know this."

"It was in the afternoon."

"Before dark?"

"Oh, yes; it was quite daylight then. He came to me and kissed me strangely several times, saying scarcely a word, and afterwards he went out without bidding me good-bye."

"Did he ever act like this before?"

"Never. I thought he was thinking of his affairs. I did not say anything for fear of grieving him."

"Did he not say then where he was going?"

"No. I looked through the window, and saw him walk down the street towards your house."

"Did your brother go with him?"

"No; he went out some time after."

"After dark?"

"Yes; the lamps had been lighted. I saw him go down the street the same way."

"And did you hear him come back?"

"Yes; he let himself in with a key, nearly an hour after. I met him on the stairs, and gave him a candle with which he went up to his room."

"Did he speak to you then?"

"Yes; he looked pale, and I asked him whether he was ill. He answered me angrily, and bade me go back to my room, and keep there, threatening me if he found me on the stairs again."

"Did he ever threaten you before?" I said, burning with indignation.

She made me no answer, but leaned upon my arm and sobbed afresh.

"The villain!" I exclaimed, interpreting her silence, "I would that you had told me this before; but thank Heaven! this can never be again. Henceforth I will be your protector. But you must keep heart. You have need of all your strength and fortitude. Recollect again, and tell me if you can remember whether he went out a second time?"

"He did. I heard him go. I sat up late at work in the drawing-room, alone. I heard him walk down stairs again about midnight and go out, shutting the door gently. I wondered where he had gone, and was becoming very anxious at my father's absence. I sat in the dark, looking through the window, I know not how long—it seemed to me a very long time. When he came back again he told me that my father was gone away to escape from his difficulties, and bade me go to bed, and speak to no one of his absence. I went up to my room, and sat there until it began to get light, and I had determined to seek you. I scarcely hoped to find you; but I stole downstairs and came here to look at the house, and see if any one was up yet. I saw you from a distance put back the shutters of the lower room and look out."

"Look at this," I said, showing her the gold stud that I had found in the brewery. "Tell me if you have ever seen it before?"

"It belongs to my brother," she said, after examining it. "I know it by this double rim. He had missed one last night, and was searching for it."

"Ellen," I said, "you must have all faith and confidence in me, and do exactly as I tell you. You must not go home again. I will take you at once to my mother. She will receive you as her own child, and love you for my sake. But your own home is no place for you now. By and by you will know why I say this, and see that I asked it only for your good."

She suffered me to lead her back, as I proposed.

My mother was up when we returned. I told her that a domestic trouble had made it necessary for Ellen to remain with us for a short time. I would not tell her more then, lest her anxiety should betray the truth.

VII.

On the morning of my interview with Ellen, I received a note, marked "private," from Charles Wrothesley, informing me that he had given notice of the circumstances of his father's death, and that an inquest would be held on the afternoon of the following day. I shuddered as I read the cold and formal style in which it was written, and the few customary phrases in which he alluded to the calamity which had befallen his family. I had scarcely reflected until now upon the position in which I was placed, by being the first to discover the proofs of his guilt. In my eagerness to ascertain the truth, I had not thought of the obligation that would rest on me to divulge these facts, and thus to become the instrument of procuring his condemnation. I knew that, on the following day, I should be called upon to give my evidence as to the finding of the body; and that even if I were disposed to conceal what had come to my knowledge, it would be impossible. I began to repent that I had voluntarily sought after these facts—that I had not rather stifled my suspicions when they first arose, as absurd and unnatural, and shrunk from seeing or hearing anything which might tend to confirm them. And, parricide as I believed him, he was the brother of Ellen, and some-

thing of the shame of his guilt must rest upon her. The particulars of her father's death could not long be kept secret from her. The remarkable circumstances, and the atrocity of his crime, would spread it abroad. At whatever distance we might be, or however long a time might have elapsed, some persons would probably discover that she was the sister of the murderer; some taunt or sneer would remind her that, through my instrumentality, her brother had been brought to a shameful death. How could she regard me with other than feelings of horror? The judgment of men, and of my own conscience, would condemn me, if I concealed these facts, having once known them—much more if I prevaricated and shuffled in a court of justice, where I should be sworn to divulge all that I knew: but how could I plead these things to her? In her thoughts I must be present for ever; not as I had boasted—as her friend and protector—but as the destroyer of her brother, and the cause of her sorrow and disgrace.

The day after the death of the old man passed away slowly. I sat till evening in the room where I had spent the night, alone, for I could not bear the presence of Ellen while these things were in my thoughts. In the evening, Charles Wrothesley came again as I expected. I heard his knock, and let him in myself, so that we were alone together. He looked pale, and said he was fatigued. I got him a chair, and he sat by the firelight while I walked to and fro in the room. He spoke of the affairs of the bank, so confidently, that I began to doubt the correctness of

Ellen's belief in her father's difficulties. What could have tempted him to the crime of murder, but the hope of getting his father's property? He sat for a while with his face buried in his hands without speaking. "I have kept up my courage till now, Mr. Day," said he in a tone that seemed perfectly natural; "but I can hold out no longer."

The apparent sorrow in his tone, and in the expression of his features, as the firelight flickered on them, overpowered my suspicions for a moment. I poured him out some wine, and begged him to drink. "By the way," said he, as he took the glass from me, "it is very strange that my sister Ellen has been out since the morning."

"Your sister is here," I said. "She called here this morning; and I thought it well, under the circumstances, to advise her to remain here for a while." His hand fell with the glass before it had touched his lips. I saw an uneasy movement throughout his whole body. He rose from his chair, at last, and demanded in a sharp tone my reason for advising her to leave her home at that time.

"I have ample reason," I said; "but I will state none at present. Your sister is here by her own free will, and she will remain here."

"There is some plot against me in all this," he said. "I will see her myself, and ask her what all this means."

"Stay," said I, passing between him and the door; "as yet your sister does not know my real motive for

advising her to remain here; but if you force me, I will tell the truth in her presence." He seemed to falter for a moment; and I drew from my pocket the shirt-stud that I had found, and held it before him, in the strong firelight, between my thumb and finger.

"I found this small gold shirt-stud in the brewery last night," I said. "Your sister tells me it is yours."

He inclined his face towards it, and scrutinised it closely for a moment. His face was ghastly pale, and his eyes looked hollow, like those of a man who has been ill for many months. He stammered out a denial that the shirt-stud was his, and with a weak semblance of anger, took his hat, and hurried out of the place.

On the following morning the two clerks of the banking-house, coming to their business at the usual hour, found the shutters still fastened, and the blinds of all the windows closely drawn down. Charles Wrothesley had fled, and it was quickly rumoured through the town that the servant had been sent home the night before, in order to give him an opportunity of departing with all the available money in the place, and thus to defraud the creditors of the bank. The news of the old man's death had spread abroad, and many began already to accuse the son of the murder. The coroner, upon my evidence, adjourned the inquest, in the hope of his being arrested; but although he was advertised in the "Hue and Cry," and a strict watch was kept upon vessels leaving the towns on the coast, no trace of him was discovered. It became absolutely necessary that Ellen should give evidence on the adjourned inquest as to her brother's absence on

the night of the murder, and, for this purpose, my mother conveyed to her gently the circumstances of her father's death, and the suspicion that had fallen upon her brother. It was a terrible ordeal; but she passed through it bravely. Stronger proof still was found in the evidence of the servant girl who had opened the door to him the first time of his return, and, as it was supposed, immediately after the murder. She deposed, that after he had gone out a second time, she found, on going into his room, that he had changed his boots and trousers, and that these were saturated with some brewer's stuff, as if he had accidentally stepped in a trough of yeast; and such a trough was discovered, in truth, between the spot where I had found the candle and the chamber in which was the mouth of the great vat. All this, together with his flight, decided the jury. The surgeon, indeed, who made the examination of the body, evinced some doubts, from certain signs, whether drowning had been the real cause of death, notwithstanding the fact that the body had been first found in the water; but no traces of poison—the only possible cause remaining (for there were no marks of evidence on the body), could be discovered, nor could any bottle, such as might have contained poison, be found upon a careful search. But the hesitation of the surgeon, who was a local practitioner, weighed but little in the minds of the jury, who returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against Charles Wrothesley."

Weeks, months, and at length years, rolled away, and no tidings whatever of the supposed murderer had been

obtained. The facts had faded from the public mind, except in the neighbourhood of their occurrence. Ellen had since become my wife, and we had long taken up our residence in London, where my mother resided with us. My business had prospered, and by degrees we had ceased to speak of old sorrows; though now and then some accidental circumstance, recalling the name of her brother, would throw a gloom over our comfort. The old brewery had been sold by the creditors of the bank, and had twice changed hands since we had left Holt. At length I read in a newspaper that the building had been disposed of in lots, and that it was intended at once to pull it down.

VIII.

One evening, not long after I had read this announcement, I was surprised to receive a note in an unknown hand, begging me to come to the writer, who stated that he knew me well, and that he had need of medical assistance. The words were scribbled in pencil and half effaced. The note contained neither name nor address, but stated that the bearer would accompany me to point out the place. The man who brought it was an ill-looking fellow, with a countenance bruised and battered, like that of a prize-fighter. I interrogated him as to the writer of the note; but he persisted in saying that it had been given to him by the woman of the house, and that he did not know anything further. The address which he gave, however, was in a remote part of the town, and from the writer sending for me at that

distance, and mentioning my name, I felt sure that it was some one who knew me personally. A faint suspicion that it might be Charles Wrothesley passed through my mind; but the handwriting was that of an illiterate person, and the words were misspelt here and there. It is not uncommon for a surgeon to receive such mysterious messages, and the long time that had elapsed since his disappearance seemed to have made the possibility of his return too remote to be entertained, without some stronger reason than I had. I had never doubted that on the very night of his departure, he had contrived to embark from one of the near coast towns, by some small vessel sailing for the Dutch or Belgian coast. If so, I knew that he would rather beg for bread there, than incur the risk of returning to England. Only a short time previously, a man had been hanged for a murder, committed in England thirty years before. The accounts of this had been in all the papers, and the circumstances were too interesting to him to have escaped his attention, in whatever part of Europe he might be hiding. The facts of this case would have effectually warned him of the vigilance of the police, and of the danger of his returning with the hope that time had obliterated the record of his crime.

It was nearly ten o'clock, and rain was falling, as I saw from the shining appearance of the messenger's patched and greasy apparel. I despatched him to a neighbouring stand for a hackney-coach, and, putting on my greatcoat, prepared to accompany him. The street that he had named was in the neighbourhood of

Wapping. The driver found it with difficulty. It was a narrow, winding lane, chiefly of dilapidated warehouses, along the side of the river, of which I caught a glimpse now and then at the bottom of an alley, running between dead walls, and lighted by a solitary lamp. He stopped at last before a little chandler's shop, at which they sold beer, for it had a signboard, with the name of some unknown brewer over the windows, and several men were inside, drinking. The place was lighted by two thin candles; the roof was low, and hung with balls of cord, and other things, that touched my hat as I stood upright there, and a woman was drawing beer from one of a row of barrels ranged against the wall.

I told her that I came to the writer of the note which the man had brought. Her manner indicated that she expected me, and knew my errand. She opened a door at the back of the shop, and called "Burrows!" in a shrill voice, up the stairs. A haggard-looking man, in rusty black, made his appearance, with a rushlight in his hand, and asked who wanted him.

"It's the lodger's doctor come," said she.

The man beckoned to me to follow him; but, as I was mounting the stairs, the woman called me back.

"If you're a friend of Mr. Cole," she said, "perhaps you'll give the man something for carrying the letter. The gentleman upstairs is very bad off, I know."

I judged it prudent to pay the man, as suggested, without inquiring further respecting my patient then. I bade the man stay for me in the shop, and not leave

there till he saw me again. "How long has your lodger been here?" I asked of the man in black, as I followed him up the creaking and broken staircase.

"Better than a month," replied the man.

"Stay," I said, as we stood upon the landing. "Do you happen to know where your lodger came from?"

"He come from France, I think," replied the man. "He landed at the wharf by the Tower, where I stand, and hired me to carry his trunk. He was very ill, and did not seem to have anywhere to go to; for he asked me if I knew of a lodging, and, as I happened to have a snug little room to let, I brought him here."

"And is he still ill?"

"Ay, indeed; in a very bad state. I tell him he should try to walk out a little; but he won't stir from the house."

The inmate of the room must have overheard something of our conversation; for I heard a noise, as if some one had sprung out of bed; and, the moment after, the key of the door turned in the lock.

"Who's there?" cried a hoarse voice within.

"It is I, Mr. Day, the surgeon," I said; but, while I was speaking, I heard a groan, and the noise as of something falling on the floor. We listened for a moment; but the room had become silent. I rapped at the door again and again, but received no answer. And the room was dark, so that we could see nothing through the keyhole.

"We must break open the door!" I exclaimed. "The man has fallen down in a fit."

"Of course the friends he belongs to will pay any damage?" said the man.

I turned the handle in my hand, and flung the weight of my body against it. The door flew back immediately; but it met with some resistance that prevented its opening wide.

"Give me the light," I said.

I took the miserable rushlight from his hand; and lowering it gently, so that the wind might not blow it out, found a man lying on the floor in his shirt. The features were thin and sharp; his hair was half gray, and his whole body seemed horribly emaciated. I looked at him for some moments, before I could feel sure that it was the face of my old enemy, so greatly was he changed. The room, excepting an old table and chair, and the bed he had just quitted, was quite bare and filthy. The plaster walls were crumbling away; and only one small window—a square hole, high above the bed—gave an entrance to light or air. As I knelt down and felt his pulse, I could hear the industrious gnawing of a rat under the boards. I bade the man help me to raise him on the bed.

"He don't want bleeding," said he; "he wants food; he aint ordered anything this two days."

I sent at once for some brandy; and begged him to bring a pan of hot water, or to make a fire in the room. He began to revive before the man returned; and the application of these restoratives brought him round at last.

"I am glad you came alone, Day," said he, when the man had left the room. "I don't mind your seeing

me here; but I wouldn't have Ellen know what a rat-hole I have been living in, for a twelvemonth's peace and rest."

"You must be removed from here at once," said I. "This unwholesome place is destroying you."

"When I go out of here," he replied, with a ghastly smile, "the undertaker's men will carry me. It doesn't much matter, so that the law will let me die in peace. I have lived rather fast, over the water. I was pretty strong once, but it has quite broken me up at last. They might have let me rest where I was; but those curious French police spy everything. One morning they ferret me out in my lodgings; tell me I have no regular way of living; accuse me of habitual gambling; and show such an intimate knowledge of my history on the Continent as quite strikes me dumb. It is of no manner of use disputing with them. I must pack up at once, and proceed to the coast in company with my friend, the spy, who undertakes to see me aboard the steamboat for England; and so, though they did not know it, they thrust me again right into the lion's jaws."

"A terrible story this," I said, shocked to find him so hardened; "more fearful still in what it suggests than what it tells."

"Why, so it is, Day," he answered, in a more serious tone; "and yet, if I have had faults, I have suffered more than enough to outweigh them a hundredfold. It is you who have occasioned my misery; but I forgive you."

"Nay," I said; "pause, and consider if there was no other cause."

"No other; or not the cause that you suspect, as I am living!" he exclaimed, sitting upright in the bed, "except my own folly. It is you who obliged me to fly—who tempted me to defraud my father's creditors—who had me branded as a parricide—who forced me to plunge into that terrible whirlpool, which now casts me up again, such a shattered, miserable wreck as you behold."

He spoke rapidly, and with an earnestness too deep to be mistaken.

"This is a mystery that I cannot fathom," I said. "Did not your flight alone bring suspicion on you?"

"When you showed me what you had found in the brewery," he answered, "I saw that you believed me a murderer. I knew that you must consider me your enemy, and I hoped for no mercy from you. I saw, indeed, by your removing my sister from our house, and openly defying me, that you had determined to crush me. To stay was almost certain destruction. What wonder, then, if I resolved to fly? And having made this resolution, is it strange that I yielded to the temptation of furnishing myself with funds at the expense of my father's customers?"

"Would that I had rather believed you innocent!" I exclaimed. "Not from malice, as I hope for mercy, did I pursue you, but with horror at finding myself compelled to be your accuser. Show me that I was mistaken, and I may yet do something to repair my error. Show me this, and you will relieve my mind of a load greater than any that my regrets may bring."

"It is a long story, and I am weak to-night," said he; "but I will try to go through it. You need not tell it to Ellen yet. By and by."

IX.

I propped the sick man in the bed with pillows, and wheeled the bedstead nearer the fire. He was silent for some time, gazing at the fire as if recalling the events he was about to narrate.

"When I was quite a youth," he began—"ah! what a time it seems since!—I had an idea that, by a bolder plan of business, my father might speedily acquire greater riches, and come at last to rival the wealthiest men in the county. Whether this idea grew out of my own pride, or whether it was this that made me proud, I do not know—so early had it taken possession of my mind. I used to look on my sister Ellen's pretty face, and vow that she should marry some rich, great man. When first I began to feel myself a man, I laid this thought aside for a while; but it was always with a kind of stifled self-reproach for my indolence. I resided in Germany for some time, and lived freely, with other young Englishmen. One day—it was in Heidelberg—I visited the theatre, and saw the play of Hamlet performed in German. The translator had rendered it almost word for word. When the actor came to that soliloquy, in which the young prince analyses so curiously the workings of his own mind, and marvels at himself for delaying his purpose, his

words struck me as strangely adapted to my case. The next day I started for England to take my place in my father's room. I was steady and industrious, and my father had confidence in me. By degrees I unfolded my projects. I persuaded him to adopt them cautiously at first; but at last there was no other course but to go on. We became embarrassed, and strove to retrieve ourselves by more desperate measures. Our business had thus grown so complicated that none but myself knew its extent. My father gave it up, and took to a careless melancholy way of life that increased my troubles. All this made me morose and irritable, I know; but I never had great patience with misfortune. How, among other things, I advised my father to recall the mortgage money of your mother's house, you remember; and also, how my father, in his strange despondent humours, liked to wander about every part of the old building."

"I have often seen him there," said I. "I used to be surprised at his altered manners."

"He brooded over these troubles night and day. He could not endure the prospect of ruin before him. I had a dread of leaving him alone, and often followed him when he went out. One day," he continued, lowering his tone, and speaking more slowly—"one day I missed him in the house for some time, and became alarmed. I knew of his habit of visiting the brewery, and I naturally went there first to seek him. It was some time after dusk: the little door in the gate was open and I went in. In the room where you

found the light burning, I discovered him, lying on the ground, beside the wort troughs, quite dead. I found a bottle, labelled 'poison,' near him, and there was a smell of almonds in the place. I knew by this that he had taken prussic acid, and must have been dead some time. I was struck with horror at first, and was about to give an alarm; but some evil spirit in that moment put it into my head that it would be an eternal disgrace and ruin to us to let the world know that he had died by his own hands. I had still a hope of retrieving our fortune by some lucky speculation, and I might have done it, perhaps, had things gone on; but this secret once known, I knew that a sudden run would ensue, and reveal, in a few hours, the state of our affairs. I did not hesitate long; I took the bottle first, and thrust it in a crevice between the rickety frame of the window, and the wall where the candle stood."

He paused a moment, and shuddered so strongly that I felt as if the thrill passed swiftly from him to me. "It was a horrible, unnatural thought," he continued; "but there are times when a casuistry will tempt us, though it is weak to palliate when the thing is done. I looked about the place, and found the little room where the pump and the great cistern were. The sight of this determined me. I dragged the body along the floor to the side of the vat, and thrust it in."

I shrunk from him involuntarily, as he came to this terrible confession. He noticed my movement and stretched out his fleshless arm from under the bed-

clothes and held me by the wrist with the gripe of a drowning man. Large sweat-drops gathered on his forehead, and a strong unnatural colour had come out upon his cheeks. "I know how this must sound in your ears," he continued; "but the punishment that I have suffered has made me bold and repentant. I have awakened to a sense of my reckless and sinful career, and my words come from a bruised heart. From the moment that I heard the loud splash of the body falling into the water below, my misfortunes have never ceased a moment or relented. I did not dare to take the light and look down into the vat. I would have braved the consequence of his death a hundred times to have been able to undo this act; but I had no choice now, but to put on a bold front and play my part naturally. While I was hesitating at this moment, I heard the noise of the shutting of the gate across the yard. I knew that some one was coming in, and determined to meet him at once; but in my haste my foot slipped, and I trode in one of the troughs. I was agitated and confused, and I dreaded meeting any one before I had had time to compose myself. The thought that I looked guilty, and that another moment's hesitation would betray me, made me desperate. I kicked off my shoes, and, taking them in my hand, glided half-way down the stairs and waited in a little recess upon the lower landing. Some one passed close to me; I did not then know that it was you. What happened afterwards you know. On the morrow I became convinced that you possessed a knowledge of circum-

stances sufficient to convict me of murder, and I fled."

It was late when I parted, promising to visit him again on the morrow. The story which he had told me made a deep impression on my mind. During my journey in the coach I had scarcely observed the features of the neighbourhood, which I now saw was of the worst description — narrow lanes between high walls; alleys of deserted houses, with broken windows, lighted with dull oil lamps, at long distances; wretched little public houses, closed, but noisy with people inside; yards with great crazy gates, in which all kinds of unwholesome trades were carried on—I noticed now, as I passed through the deserted streets on foot. A sailor was crying murder at the corner of a court—unheeded by the police, who were too well used to such alarms to believe in them. The rain had ceased; but the roads were deep with mud, and the night was dark. I walked on, musing upon the strange circumstances of that night, and upon the danger to which Wrothesley was exposed by remaining in such a place. I began to regret that I had not taken measures for removing him at once, till the thought of leaving him there for another night made me more and more anxious. I had got as far as Tower Hill, before I found a hackney coach, which I hailed, and bade the man drive back to the place I had left, resolved to persuade Wrothesley, at all hazards, to accompany me back.

I had scarcely been absent half an hour, when the lumbering vehicle drove into the street again, and drew

up at the door of the beer-shop. The place was closed when they had let me out before; but now I found the door open, and saw a light in the shop, and heard some persons talking. I looked up at the sign above the lamp; and being assured that this was the house, I alighted. The woman was in the shop, in her night-cap, with several strangers; and the man who had shown me up stairs was with them, holding the light. They stared at me as I appeared on the threshold. The man with the light rushed forward and said, "Have they found him?"

"Found whom?" said I.

"Oh! I suppose you don't know your friend's bolted?"

"How is this?" I exclaimed, beckoning to the coachman to come in, for I began to suspect foul play. "He was too weak to stir."

"He *has* stirred though," said the man. "Come and see." Wondering what could be the meaning of his words, I followed him again up the rotten staircase. Opening the door of his room, I found it pretty nearly as I had left it, except that he was gone. My chair was near the fire, beside the table; and the bedstead stood still as I had slightly turned it, with the foot to the wall: but the bedclothes were thrown back in disorder.

"That's the way he went," said the man, nodding his head sideways towards the window above the bedstead. "We found this sheet and counterpane tied together, and fastened to the sash-cord."

I sprang upon the bed, and clutching the opening with my hands, raised myself and held on for a moment, looking out.

"Good God! This is the river!" I exclaimed.

"Ay," said the man; "and the tide's just on the ebb, too."

I could see the lights, here and there, along the low dusky line of the opposite shore, and on some vessels creeping down in the dark night. The wind blew fresh; and the waves kept moving along under the wharf, with a dull sucking noise.

"What space lies between here and the water?"

"Hardly footing for a cat. Unless he knowed of some boat there, he'll never turn up alive again."

"There is a mystery in this which I will fathom," said I. "If there has been any foul play, the guilty shall not escape!"

"There's no foul play, that I know of," said the man. "It happened just this way. George Savage, the man that took the letter to your house, thinks there's something wrong, and peaches, in hopes of a reward. The officers come soon after you are gone. He hears 'em—your friend, I mean—speaking to me in the shop, for his ears were very sharp; and, as quick as lightning, he ties these things together, takes them in his hands, and slips out of the window. I saw him looking out there the other day; and I dare say he thought he could do it safely on a pinch."

I understood in a moment all that had happened. I took the candle from his hand, and hastening down into

the shop again, asked the woman for a link, and begged one of the men to come with me. There was a narrow alley between walls, beside the house, at the bottom of which was a landing-place for boats. I lighted the link; and, standing on the wet and slimy steps, which the water kept sweeping over, looked up at the back of the house, and the window where I had lately been looking out. I found it, as the man had told me, almost flush with the wall of the wharf, which was of wood, and quite perpendicular. Tufts of grass and weeds grew out of the rotten timber, which looked slippery with moisture.

"Not much chance there," said my guide, "unless the gentleman could swim. What's that?"

We listened, and heard the noise of voices in a boat close by. "It's the police dragging," said the man. "I know every kind of sound you'll hear on the river." I listened to the noise, till it died away, as if the boat was floating down with the tide.

"They haven't found him," said my companion; "I can hear that."

On the third day after these events, some fishermen near Barking Creek found the corpse of a strange man, half sunk in the mud, at low water. It was subsequently buried in the churchyard at Barking — only myself and a medical friend being present as mourners.

A few days later, Ellen and I started on a journey to Holt. There were too many sad associations with our life there, for ours to be a journey of pleasure; and the weather was rainy and windy. We passed through

the main street of the town unobserved, though noticing, ourselves, many changes there, until we came to the brewery. Bills, announcing the sale for that day, were on the doors; and the walls were marked with the numbers of lots ready to be pulled down by the purchasers. The doors were open, and several persons were entering to view the premises, intending, probably, to become bidders. We entered with the rest, and sauntered about the yard for a while.

"Come," said I, at last, "let us go up the stairs."

Ellen clung to my arm, trembling; but I bade her take courage, and go with me. Two strangers were in the room where I had found the candle burning, one night, ten years before. I fancied, by their gestures, that they were speaking of the supposed murder, and I kept at a distance till they were gone. "This was the place," I said, approaching the window, as soon as we were alone. I found a crevice between the window-frame and the wall; and thrusting my hand in, I pulled out at first only dust and morsels of touchwood; but plunging my arm deeper, and feeling about for some time, I brought up a small phial. Having blown and wiped the dust off, I discovered a label outside with the word "poison" printed on it. Ellen wept; for she knew now the true story of that night, and all that had happened since.

"Let us go now," I said, "and bid farewell to this place for ever. I knew that I should find this, and be able to show it to you. For Charles's sake I did it, and as some atonement for my unfortunate error.

Come! dry your eyes, for we have done now with the past."

We stayed at our inn, waiting for the coach, for some hours. As we passed the "Golden Ram," on our way back, we saw that the sale was ended. Some men were already on the roof, beginning to pick away the brick-work of the front wall. Our name was already forgotten there. My father was the last who had fulfilled the Tradition of the Golden Ram.

MILTON'S GOLDEN LANE.

An old Lincolnshire clergyman, who used to visit Milton, has preserved a pleasing picture of the blind poet sitting in the summer evening to enjoy the fresh air at the door of his house near Bunhill Fields, "where he would sometimes receive the visits of people of quality or distinguished parts." At that time the Artillery Ground was not shut in with houses. There were the grounds next to it planted by the City with shady walks for the recreation of the citizens. There were gardens and a windmill or two. Bunhill Fields *were* fields then; so were Spitalfields; so were Moorfields; so were Spafields. Hereabouts, from old times, was the favorite resort of the citizens of London. In Henry the Eighth's reign, the people—jealous of an attempt to stop pastimes in the fields on the north side of the city wall by digging deep trenches in various parts—sallied forth in a mass, and filled them up again.

I had been thinking of these things one day not long ago; of "the flowery rivulets and noise of water-

wheels," which an old writer describes, "on the north side of the city wall;" of certain springs about the neighbourhood once bubbling up clear and bright in the midst of fields, and credited with many cures. I had been wandering on the north side of the city wall, or rather of the site on which that wall formerly stood. I had bidden the streets with the carts and coaches and the busy crowd all vanish, and the meadows come again. I had replanted vineyards, restored trees, gardens, and public walks. I had particularly restored three windmills which stood close together on a certain mount near here. Dirty sewers I had turned again into the flowery rivulets of the old writer, and with my mind's ear I had listened for the drowsy murmuring of water-wheels.

Over this ground, hallowed by the memory of Milton, I had been idly wandering, in short, upon a summer's day; and, setting aside what I had fancied, I wrote down, when I got home, exactly what I had seen. Here it is:

Within ten minutes' walk from the Post-office I turned, in the first place, down Golden Lane. It is a thoroughfare which serves as a High Street to the neighbourhood of which I am about to record my experience. Most people know Golden Lane. It is a thoroughfare with gin-shops at each end; and, generally, a few strangers passing through it, except when the fever is unusually busy there, and then a barrier is placed at the entrance, with policemen stationed by it to warn off the public; as I remember once to have

observed. Whether the residents of Golden Lane, and its vicinity, were also warned to stay at home, and keep the fever to themselves, I do not know.

The thermometer being at seventy-five degrees in the shade, I found the Red Bull at the corner doing a roaring trade. Within five minutes fifteen persons went in, and only six came out. I do not reckon those who carried beer away in their own jugs; I only noticed the bar customers. I observed that few seemed to go in by predetermination. I did not see anybody make a short cut from the opposite side of the way direct to the doors.

A bricklayer's labourer, for example, had no thought of working, that hot afternoon; but, on the other hand, he had no thought of getting drunk; he was merely lounging with his hands in his pockets. He suddenly stopped short—a touch at the doors, so easy to push open with their leathern band and nicely balanced weights behind, and in a second he found himself before the shining taps! Two women coming up the lane, talking loud and fast, had little baskets, and came out no doubt to buy small quantities of grocery. But the noisiest of them—still talking under the bonnet of her friend—knew instinctively that she was abreast of the Red Bull. Without turning her head she also pushed at the door, and drew in her companion—not unwilling. Then again the sallow little cabinet-maker. He was going to the timber yard to buy a bit of veneer; he certainly didn't come out to stay at the Red Bull. He passed it, he had reached the utmost extremity of its

attraction before he was sensible of its influence. He wavered. I fancy that he carried with him just enough money to pay for the veneer he wanted, and no more; he turned back, and was sucked in by the Red Bull.

In the lane, right and left, for a quarter of a mile each way, the inhabitants get all their wants supplied. On each side dark entrances to courts and alleys look like rat-holes, through which dwellers in the rotten maze creep in and out, like rats, in quest of such food and fresh air as Golden Lane affords. Amusement might be found there also. In Golden Lane there is a good dry skittle-ground; in Golden Lane there was to be a raffle for a handkerchief, and at the same house, after the raffle, the proprietor and the winner were each to contribute something in order that dancing might commence at nine o'clock; in Golden Lane there is the Hall of Harmony, where Mr. Quivers, the celebrated patter singer, proposed, on Saturday evening week, to commence his miscellaneous entertainment of singing, dancing, and other novelties; and to this pleasure, the charge for admission was one penny only. The Hall devoted now to harmony has seen some changes in its day. It was a chapel once. On an old board—which the harmonist has not gone to the expense of removing from the wall—I read, in half-obliterated letters, "Star Coffee-house." Then, on the door there was still a slit, with the words "letters and bills for acceptance" legible above it, although I can't imagine, just now, any capitalist who would care to have a business

residence in Golden Lane. It is a place for pleasure now. In Golden Lane there is the Temple of Arts, divided by a thin screen from the poor man's confectioners, the baked potato shop. Certain nights are devoted otherwise to rational amusement. The friends of dancing were invited to attend that evening, when a live pig and a silver snuff-box would be given away. There was a printed declaration in the window, in which the undersigned John Sullivan begged to state, that, having been the holder of the prize ticket for the sow and litter latterly announced to be given away; and, having omitted, for three days, to call for them, the proprietor had disposed of the same; but that, upon application, he had been compensated to the utmost of his expectation. After this, who could refuse faith in the live pig and silver snuff-box? Golden Lane blends charity with pleasure. If a tale of human suffering could prompt a man to dance, let him come forward and dance on Tuesday next at the Hit or Miss beer-shop, for the benefit of "Thomas Tibbs, alias Deaf One, who has lost is license;" or on Thursday, for the benefit of Emma Hill and Sarah Bunney, who are pithily said to be "in trouble;" or, if suffering begets a love of song, Saturday next, at the same house, there will be singing for all who sympathise with Jerry Allen, better known as Swivel. He states, without punctuation, and with all the incoherence of real trouble, that "having been out of plaice for sum time his landlord is going to distress him of his home if some assistans cannot be obtaned through the median

of this trial he hopes to retain it the convivial meetin will be under the direction of Thomas Sculley and Ned the Nummer and the cheer will be taken at eight o'clock."

If an inhabitant of that neighbourhood desired to be shaved—the desire was not common there, if I might judge from the faces I met—it would be done with ease for him in Golden Lane at the charge of one halfpenny; a red and blue pole stands forth to proclaim it. Did he want his hair cut? Hear Mr. Frizz, his verses:—

"I cut you hair, and brus it too,
A halpenny is all i chardge to you."

Was he scrupulous about his personal appearance? Hear Mr. Frizz, again:—

"To cleen you shoos; brus coat and hat,
A halpenny is all i chardge for that."

The rag-shop keeper illustrated his lesson upon wasting nothing, with a picture of plum-pudding and of ribs of beef. The chimney-sweep—whose house had a bright brass knocker, and is the cleanest in the lane—was a patron of both these fine arts; he spoke both by poetry and painting. He it was who,

"—— by desire,
Extinguises chimleys when on fire,"

as his picture witnessed, in which a man and a boy, in a very well-paved, but deserted street, were hastening to

a tremendous fire in the chimney of number seven. There was a boldness in his conception of the relative sizes of man, boy, and house: the man and boy, being the heroes of the scene, were represented in a massive and colossal way.

Sun Court. Premature twilight came upon me as I passed under the roofed way into Sun Court; with its inky-pools; its rag-stuffed windows; its four miserable bean-stalks, whose leaves ran up, hunting for the sky, from that high window-sill; its long rows of yellow stockings and unmended shirts stretched out upon a pole from a garret window over me. They were all damp, cold, and cheerless. Could they speak they would all swear that never could a blessed ray fall, slant or perpendicular, into Sun Court, to produce a shadow of justification for its name.

Sun Court! Gloom Court, Filth Court, Cholera Court. If those rills and puddles in between the stones, whose odour hurt my nostrils, were not dried up in the summer weather, could I think that they were ever dry? I might have heard the truth of them from a child, or man (I don't know which), who—in the cast-off trousers of a giant held to him by one brace, and tucked up to his knees—was amusing himself by stamping in the biggest and foulest pool until its contents flew against doors and windows right and left; but what intelligible answer to a question could I have got from him? I might as well have catechised his friend the hungry-looking hen, whose skin was bare in many places; and who, since her eyes were always bent upon the sickly

ground, must have a very bad opinion of this world of ours. Here was another court; and there, another beyond that. Two or three branching out of them; and all alike—all with rills and puddles, heaps of oyster-shells and putrid cabbage-leaves scattered in defiance of boards at every corner threatening with penalties, in the name of the churchwardens, and in pursuance of acts of Parliament, any one who should deposit any nuisance upon any part of those roadways. Each court had its own rotten water-butt and single dust-hole, for general use—while in all, the open doors and windows swarmed with men, women, and children, gasping after air.

Presently I came to something different. A place, not less, but rather more bestrewn with oyster-shells and cabbage-leaves; not less watered with filthy puddles. A square—a yard, of which I could not learn the name—belonging to a class. In Belgrave Square dwell lords and ladies; in this square dwell costermongers only. Their wares of every kind—shell-fish, or fruit, or vegetables, or the traces of the refuse of these—were at every door. Here was to be heard such a braying of donkeys! Some costermongers with hand-barrows, and some with donkey-carts were, with replenished stores, preparing to go forth. In one barrow there was a brown mass of confectionery, like a Christmas pudding, decked out with flags of blue and yellow calico. At one halfpenny a slice, a miserable creature was prepared to vend Jamaica pine-apples.

The houses had all been whitewashed once, although

I think not within the memory of anybody here. Every door was opened back into the single ground-floor room, where man, wife, children, donkey, and vegetables, were at night shut up together. Through every window I could see the same unwholesome colour of the faces, the same turn-up bedstead with the patchwork quilt, the same rickety deal table and chair, the same kind of glaring coloured prints upon the walls. At one door, a donkey harnessed to a long board upon wheels, was waiting while his master was employed in peeling off the withered leaves to give a livelier appearance to a pile of yellow cabbages. The withered leaves were dropped at his own door-way, where they would lie and rot. At some windows there were men in shirt-sleeves smoking, and looking on with an air of lazy satisfaction. The donkey took advantage of his opportunity to munch the outside of a cabbage that had just been trimmed; and, being unluckily caught in the act, was checked by a sharp jerk of the bit, and three hard blows over the head. Not the log which Giant Blunderbore belaboured in the bed, could have been more patient under blows than that unhappy animal. Only a faint twitch of one ear betokened that he was a living donkey. His master, irritated, no doubt, with what looked like a defiance of authority, cried "Er-r-r-h, you brute!" and giving it an extra kick in the ribs, watched for the effect with a stern eye.

There were three outlets to this square. It mattered not which I took. It was my whim to wander in this labyrinth, asking no one to direct me, until I should

emerge once more into the light of day. I got into long passages between high walls of houses without any windows to them, except here and there a hole; and here and there I passed under a narrow archway, leading into other courts and rookeries interminable. Strange beings met me here. A shuffling woman passed me, with a face that was born miserable, in clothes as jagged as a saw, carrying a bundle of rushes to be knotted and plaited for the wicks of night-lights. It was the time for coming home from work. A tiny boy—so set in shape that any one might see that he would never grow bigger, ragged of course, and covered with bits of flock and feather—was on his way home from the bedding factory at which he worked. Shouting out the last cant phrase, of which he did not know the meaning, and stamping as he went to keep alive a constant ring and echo of his steps between the walls, he did not seem to grumble at his lot, or to think it hard. Then, I met a man with long, black, greasy ringlets, in an old-fashioned great-coat that had a marvellously greasy collar; he was looking downward, hurrying on with a strange nervous step, as though he had been used to pick his way barefoot over sharp flints. Next, I met an old man, with thin grey hair—so old, that I think he must have lived, when he was young, in some more wholesome place—thin, tall, hollow-chested, but not decrepit, with his skin so tightly stretched upon his face and forehead, that it seemed a very death's head that peeped out above his shoulders. He carried leaves of deal, cut in wafery thinness, to make bonnet-boxes.

It was an awkward corner into which I had got myself. I had to go back. Everybody wondered why I ever came. I noticed that they called the place "Leech's Rents;" and in my heart I did not bless Leech, nor envy his rents. But less cause to bless him had that bricklayer's labourer who had been laid up for six months, and unfit for work. His complaint was in the lungs. He had been very bad lately, he said, and was now getting better. I should not like to tell him so, but I feared those loosely-hanging clothes of his would never fit him properly again. They were all labouring men like himself up here, he said. He agreed with me that it was a filthy hole, not fit for a dog to live in, and then his bit of energy set him coughing: when the cough ceased, he went on to say—"Lord bless you, sir! what you see now is nothing." He didn't know why they lived up here, except that it was cheap; perhaps they might get cleaner places as cheap, if they tried; but they didn't think about it. "Most of 'em don't mind it, sir." He couldn't say who Leech was. "The place belongs now to Skinner, the builder."

There were not many shops. Now and then there was a dingy beer-shop, with doors from which the paint had been rubbed off by dirty hands—the haunt of myriads of flies, who got intoxicated on the sloppy counter, and then staggered against the sticky fly-papers about the walls. There were no shining taps; no cabinet work; no vats; no portraits in the window of an enormous fat man explaining to lean blue teetotallers how he too was lean and blue-visaged before the happy

day when he discovered that establishment, and drank of its pure malt and hops; no programme of a goose-club, showing the members of a discontented family at dinner, who, having bought their goose at a poulterer's were forced to carve it with a saw; and side by side with them the cheerful family, congratulating each other upon having joined a goose-club; there was no judge and jury club; no harmonic meeting, admission free; there were no vans to start to Hampton Court or High Beech at two and threepence each person, to be paid for beforehand by weekly instalments. Nothing was there to allure the passer-by, or to tell him what cheer might be found within; but, a short red curtain, and a row of beer barrels inside, from which the beer was drawn direct. No wonder that the "Educational Institute," seeing the enemy so weak just here, should stick up a bill over the way offering for trifling sums to instruct young men and women every evening in "Tonic Sol Fa Singing," as well as in French, and Model Drawing! But who that could sing (tonically, or otherwise), talk French and draw, had fixed his miserable habitation there?

The burial-ground, whose iron grate I accidentally discovered in a corner of a yard, had an active, business-like appearance. A list of very moderate fees, and an attempt to claim relationship with the famous Barebone Burial Ground, at Stepney, by calling this the City Barebone Burial Ground, showed an eye wide awake to worldly interest. Peeping in, I saw, in the midst of a rank garden full of large sunflowers, and parted off with

a railing from the grave-yard, a little-house, with the word "Office" over the door, and at the door a man in faded black and with a white neck-cloth—obviously the head clerk if not the manager of the concern. The grave-yard itself was full of crevices, and was, in most places, worn quite bare of grass, with frequent digging up. Nowhere did I see the faintest trace of care and neatness. I saw seven graves open; and, at one of them, a gravedigger—his hands and clothes covered with clay—talking with a woman who had brought him bread and butter, and some tea in a tin bottle. Around the walls, numbers from one to ninety odd were painted in white upon a black ground, and beyond, in every way, the overhanging roofs of wooden houses closed around the dismal spot.

Pursuing my walk, I passed many more courts like Leech's Rents; more colonies of costermongers; more dark and filthy reproductions of Sun Court. Alleys, where women, sitting of a row on door-steps, were stitching braces; black nooks, where sweeps lived together and kept stores of soot; noisome sheds, where butchers, not disposed to cleanliness, were slaughtering their sheep while boys looked on with greedy interest. Afterwards, I passed along a narrow way of antique gabled houses, having stuccoed fronts; these once were the dwellings of a better class; although there is no pane of glass in all their leaden-framed windows bigger than my hand. Now, these houses are let out in single rooms; their outer doors are gone; they are filthy and dilapidated. Through one of the windows I saw, in a

great room, some cobblers at their work; table and stools were all the furniture; but I noticed behind them a high mantelpiece, curiously carved. One of these houses once upon a time was the abode of old Sir Simon Curll, who, from a poor barber's apprentice, became Lord Mayor of London and Master of the Wig Makers' Company. He it was who bequeathed a kilderkin of ale and a bushel of oaten biscuit, "such as mariners do eat," to be distributed annually amongst twelve poor toothless old men and women (not being Arians), who could repeat the creed of St. Athanasius; which charitable bequest the Wig Makers' Company (having five hundred pounds per annum for that purpose), with a pious respect for the wishes of the testator, do, to this day, upon the aforesaid conditions regularly offer. I wondered what this place might have been like, in those days when the builder, bearing in mind the rule that no sentence can be complete without a verb, caused the words, "This is Figtree Row," to be cut in a tablet over one of the doorways.

I wondered, too, how all that part would look from the car of a balloon, hovering not far above the house-tops. One or two brighter spots would strike the eye amidst the dark jumble of roofs; spots where there are purer homes, and purer natures, too, if there be truth in the old proverb, which makes cleanliness and goodness to dwell together. In one of those clean spots I noticed a poor mangling-woman's home, her hearth-stoned door-step, and her tidy room. She might well have excused herself if she had been dirty, having to work for a

poor crippled boy, sitting in a chair beside the doorway, and another younger child within. I stopped to ask of her my way back into Golden Lane.

The woman, who had not caught my question, rebuked her child—not the poor cripple—with "Quiet, Bill! I can't hear my own voice for you;" and then, turning to me, said, "I beg your pardon, sir!"

I asked again, and she directed me to "go straight on. Golden Lane's close by."

"Is the boy ill, ma'am?"

"No, sir. He's been lame from his birth."

"How old is he?"

"Fifteen, sir."

"Fifteen! I thought him younger. Can he walk at all?"

The woman had turned to count some clothes just taken from the mangle, and the cripple answered for himself.

"No. I never shall now, sir, as long as I live."

The mother, still counting the clothes, "Six, seven, eight, nine," stopped, and caught at his words eagerly, as if great weight were due to the sufferer's own opinion of himself; and repeated,

"You think you'll never walk, dear?"

The boy, seeming to be afraid that he had disheartened her, said, "It will be a long time first, I think, mother, if I do at all." The woman answered, "Never mind. He sorts the clothes, and does many little things for me. He's very useful to me, sir, though you wouldn't

think it." No, indeed! I should need a mother's love and tenderness to think that!

Dusk came on while I was loitering about. There was a strange change in the aspect of Golden Lane as I issued into it again. Where, in the hot day-time, I had scarcely met a soul, I found now crowds of people: women sitting on the pavement, men smoking, and standing in groups. At all the beer-shops and public-houses there were lights in the windows, and sounds of singing and dancing. From every hole and corner round about, the inhabitants seemed to have crept out into Golden Lane for a pleasant change.

Threading my way through the crowd until I found myself once more in a purer atmosphere, I thought again of the time when all the neighbourhood was a sweet rural place, and when the harvest moon I saw shining down upon it could glitter on its brooks, and cast a shadow from the form of Milton on its paths among the pleasant grass.

ONE NEW YEAR'S EVE.

I.

A FEW days before Christmas, Mr. Crabberley had calculated the exact amount which he ought to receive from his rents and mortgages that quarter. By a judicious disposition of his capital,—a watchful eye upon his tenants, to increase their rents as soon as he saw that they had improved his property,— he had brought his quarterly revenue to the sum of £320 sterling. Except Sir Harry Meltall—whose hopeful son, lately provided with a commission in the Guards, bade fair to turn the whole Meltall estate into wine and horses before he came of age—Mr. Crabberley was the richest man within a circle of ten miles round the town of Chobley. He knew that; and musing upon the circumstance, and all its pleasing associations, as he retired to rest, he had gradually dozed and fallen into a delightful slumber. To be aroused from this repose to receive his Christmas rents would have put him out of temper; but to be rudely awakened by a wretched band of minstrels, playing and singing a Christmas carol under his window in the dead of the night, was past endurance. He sprung out of bed, and flung up his

window in a moment. To his utter astonishment, they had positively found means of opening his front gates, and were serenading him, standing over their ankles in snow upon his grass-plat.

"You scoundrels!" roared Mr. Crabberley, "I know you: I'll have you all taken up. You shall be treated as vagrants—you shall be whipped, worked at the tread-mill, set to pick oakum and break stones; fed on bread and water, and cuffed about by such taskmasters as you never had in your lives."

Mr. Crabberley paused, completely out of breath by this harangue; but the fiddles continued to scrape, and the musicians to sing, utterly regardless of his words. The noise of their voices and instruments had prevented their hearing him; and his window being overshadowed by the old-fashioned roof of his dilapidated mansion, they did not see him. To be kept standing in his night-shirt at the open window, on that biting frosty night, and to be set at defiance by a band of lawless disturbers, wrought his anger to a frenzy.

"Oh! you won't go, won't you?" said he. "We'll see about that!" And he felt about over the mantel-shelf for his blunderbuss; but he recollected that he had removed it only the day before. The delay made him furious; he could not wait to dress himself, and go round to the back garden to turn loose his mastiff, Growler. Running both his hands along the window-ledge, he gathered together a heap of snow, pressed it into a hard ball, and flung it at them with all his force,—but it fell short. He was nearly mad with rage. He seized a wash-ball from his

dressing-table, a brush, an iron shaving-pot, a stone knife-sharpener from his mantel-piece, and a lump of coal from his grate, and discharged them, in a rapid volley, at his disturbers.

The enemy's fire was speedily silenced under this continuous discharge. The "Song of the Shepherds" stopped short, and the band looked towards the window.

"You villains! what do you do there?" roared old Crabberley, leaning as far as he could out of the window.

They scarcely understood his words yet; but the spokesman of the party advanced, and addressed Mr. Crabberley in a set speech, which young Mr. Chilcote, the schoolmaster, had written out expressly for them.

"According to ancient custom, at this festive season of the year," began the speaker, waving the flageolet in his right hand like a field-marshal's baton, "we, your most humble and devoted servants, the musicians of East Chobley, have taken the liberty of entertaining you with an old English song, descriptive of the watching of the shepherds in Bethlehem. Animated by a sincere desire—"

"Stop!" roared Mr. Crabberley. "You are Godby, aint you? I thought I knew you. Now, Godby, as sure as you are a living man, if you don't get out of my grounds, with all those rascals, within five minutes, you shall spend your merry Christmas in the county jail!"

Poor Godby stopped short in his magnificent harangue, muttered some apology, and slunk away, followed by the remainder of his band. Mr. Crabberley

crept shivering into bed again; where he lay awake for some time, meditating a scheme for putting an effective stop to the nuisance of carol-singing in the town of Chobley from, and after, the following Christmas-tide.

Mr. Crabberley woke before daylight on the following morning; but his daughter Alice was down before him. She had been at work by candle-light, with their old serving-woman Margaret, decorating the mantel-shelves and windows with sprigs of holly, and endeavouring to give some token of Christmas to their gloomy old house. The fire was blazing, and the breakfast ready on the table, when her father came down.

"Did those musicians wake you?" inquired Mr. Crabberley.

"No, father," said Alice. "I kept awake to hear them; though I could not distinguish their words from the back of the house. They have learned a new speech, which Mr. Chilcote has written for them."

"Chilcote had better mind his school," said Mr. Crabberley. "His new-fashioned ways of teaching give little satisfaction with some who have sent their sons to him."

Alice blushed deeply, unperceived by her father, and sat for some time, looking at the blazing fire.

"I have a number of calls to make to-day, Alice," said the old man; "I shall not be back before dusk."

Alice hardly heard him, till he begged her to help him to put on his great-coat. "Now be a good girl,"

he said, kissing her upon the threshold; "get about your household matters, before I return." Alice promised to obey him.

Mr. Crabberley was in no pleasing mood that morning. The sight of his missiles, which he gathered up from the lawn, reminded him again of the annoyance of the previous night. The sharp frosty morning suited his humour. He determined first to go round and collect some rents due from his weekly tenants. It was a task he liked; though he invariably said that it was the most troublesome duty that he knew. As he went along the High Street, the sight of the preparations for Christmas was an annoyance to him. At the cheesemonger's, the butter in the halves of firkins was marked with devices and letters formed by red holly-berries, wishing a merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all their customers.

"Ha!" he said, "of course, a merry Christmas to any who will buy their butter without weighing it afterwards.'

As he passed the grocer's, a huge coloured picture of a red-faced father and mother, helping a large family of young children to roast beef and plum-pudding, caught his eye. He stopped, and examined it a moment.

"Look at it!" he exclaimed, to a few loiterers at the window. "Is not that enough to tell you what Christmas is? Mark their faces—their great unwieldy shapes —more like pigs than men! Is that a sight to make human nature proud, or not?"

The strangers eyed him curiously, and then slunk

away, as if they felt that they ought to be ashamed of themselves for loitering about such a picture.

"Buy my holly!—holly!—holly!" cried a man with a donkey-cart loaded with holly, laurel, and mistletoe, at the corner of the street. "Buy my holly and green shrubs! Holly O!—holly O!"

"Give me sixpen'orth," said a neat, fresh-coloured servant girl, standing at the garden-gate of a private house.

"Poor, ignorant creatures!" muttered Mr. Crabberley. "They think they honour Christmas with this old Pagan custom."

Mr. Crabberley continued his way through the frozen snow, till he came to the butcher's, where fat sheep and oxen, decorated with blue ribbons, hung about the doors. Here, meeting a friend of his, he took advantage of the occasion to give his opinion upon such exhibitions, in a tone loud enough for the butcher to hear him in his little back counting-house. "What do you think of this, Skinner?" he said. His friend Skinner, who was the town lawyer, shook his head.

"This is the coarse food that makes our doctors so busy after Christmas," said Mr. Crabberley. "They may well decorate it with blue ribbons. It is not fit for dogs to eat. It's a shame they should be allowed to sell it. Ugh!"

The chandler's shop, the poulterer's, the pastry-cook's, the baker's, the fruiterer's, all showed some token of Christmas, as he passed. "So the people waste," said old Crabberley, "and starve for it afterwards. Or, if they don't, there are plenty who do, who'd be glad

of what they throw away in this manner." He stopped at last before an old red-bricked house; the door was ajar, and he pushed it open, and entered. "Anybody at home?" said he, tapping at a door in the passage. "Anybody at home, here? Nobody in, of course. Some people scent a landlord coming for his rent!" He stooped, and looked through the keyhole; but, seeing no one there, and getting no answer to the loudest rap he could give with his crabbed walking-stick, he went grumbling up to the next floor. "All out here, too!" he cried, tapping at the door above.

"No, Mr. Crabberley; at home, and at your service," said a thin, middle-aged, and gentlemanly-looking man, who opened the door. "Pray, walk in." The floor of the room was bare, and a very low fire was burning in his grate; but the walls were hung with paintings, and an easel stood against the window. Mr. Crabberley noted the nakedness of the place, and the remains of a frugal meal upon the table.

"You are always punctual, Mr. Oliver," said his landlord. "I might have been sure of finding you, if I had thought."

"I know that the payment of my rent is not a thing to be put off," said his tenant, slily.

"I wish all people thought so, Mr. Oliver," said his visitor, as he wrote him a receipt. "This plan of letting one house to several tenants, though it may bring in a little more money, is more trouble than the thing is worth. My little houses in 'Crabberley Passage' don't cause me half the annoyance."

"I suppose you go to the great sale the last day of the month?" said the artist.

"I do," said Mr. Crabberley. "Old Captain Curwen had some valuable property, if I remember. I hope to be able to get one or two bargains there."

"Here is a catalogue," said the artist. "You don't bid for pictures, do you?"

"No, never," replied his visitor, sharply.

"Then I don't mind telling you," said the artist, "that there is a little picture there which I have very good hopes of getting. If they don't bid it up higher than five pounds, I can buy it. Here it is, modestly called in the catalogue, 'No. 281, Landscape.'"

"I see it," grunted Mr. Crabberley.

"That picture," said the artist, evidently expecting to startle his visitor,—"that picture, sir, is a genuine Cornelius Schuyt!"

"Is it?" said Mr. Crabberley, scanning another part of the catalogue with knitted brows.

"It is, sir," continued the artist, warming with his subject. "And, moreover, one of the prettiest things that ever entered that artist's head—a sweet, tranquil bit of country, that does you good to look at it. I would not lose it for a baronetcy."

"Wouldn't you?" said Mr. Crabberley, carelessly, as he continued to scrutinise the catalogue.

"I wouldn't," said the artist; "but I have been so anxious lest any one else should get it, that I positively have not been able to sleep. I know I shall not get a night's rest till the sale is over. I

must have it, Mr. Crabberley. Look! that's where I mean to place it."

Mr. Crabberley looked up mechanically to the spot he indicated on the wainscot, and then continued his perusal of the catalogue.

"I shall hang it there," continued the artist, "just where the early morning sunlight falls. It will be a pleasant thing to greet my eyes on waking."

"You don't bid for anything else?" inquired his landlord.

"No," replied Mr. Oliver; "I will bid for that, to the utmost extent of my purse; but for nothing else."

"Then we shall not interfere with each other," said his visitor; "for I would not give sixpence for your Cornelius Schuyt. Good day, Mr. Oliver."

"Good day, sir," said the artist, as he closed the door, and turned to his palette and easel again.

Mr. Crabberley continued his walk while thinking of the Captain's sale, and of the bargains he might get there, till he came to the passage which was named after himself. It was a double row of small tenements facing each other, with a very narrow, ill-ventilated space between. There was no thoroughfare through it, and a little channel for dirty water, traced by a black line through the snow, ran midway down the passage. These houses were occupied chiefly by working men and their families, and Mr. Crabberley, going from door to door, with book in hand, had little difficulty in collecting his rents.

"Any one at home, here?" he said, knocking at the last house he had to call at.

"Yes, I'm here, Mr. Crabberley," said a woman's voice. "I am always here; I never go out, from one year's end to another. My work's never done. It's too much confinement, it is, indeed; and this place is built so bad, you can't breathe in it."

"Pooh! Mrs. Slacker," said Mr. Crabberley. "I marked out the plan myself. There is not a snugger little place in the town."

"I can't bear it," said Mrs. Slacker.

"Are you ready with that three weeks' rent?" inquired her landlord, sharply.

"Well, I'm not quite ready, sir," said Mrs. Slacker; "my husband has got some piecework, and he won't get his money till next week."

Mr. Crabberley might have been willing to accept this plea; but unfortunately his eye rested upon a fat goose and a black bottle upon the sideboard.

"So you can't find money for rent, but only for waste and gluttony, like your neighbours?" said Mr. Crabberley.

"Waste and gluttony, Mr. Crabberley!" exclaimed his tenant. "Do you call a goose and a bottle of ginger-wine at Christmas-time, waste and gluttony?"

"I do," replied the landlord. "I call it waste and gluttony, and dishonesty, too, while your rent is unpaid."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Slacker, "we have many a

time been poor enough at Christmas, but we have always managed to get a comfortable dinner that day, and I hope we always shall."

"I hope you always will, Mrs. Slacker," said her landlord, maliciously, as he turned away.

On Christmas Eve a broker entered Mrs. Slacker's home; and having taken an inventory of her goods, left a ragged stranger, with an habitual scowl, to spend his Christmas with the family.

Mr. Crabberley was rather tired before he reached his home again. The shops, with their Christmas display, were lighted up as he passed. He wished in his heart that their proprietors were all tenants of his, who could not pay their rent. Not far from his own gate he met a shivering ragged woman, standing with bare feet in the snow, in the middle of the roadway, and singing the identical Christmas carol that the musicians of East Chobley had annoyed him with on the previous night. A gentleman stepped forward and gave her some coin. It was the Rector of East Chobley.

"Mr. Hawthorne," said the old man, touching the alms-giver on the shoulder, "do you know who that woman is?"

"I do," replied the Rector; "it is Mary Poker."

"She has just come out of jail, where she was sent for stealing wood," said Mr. Crabberley.

"Very true," said the Rector; "but she must not starve."

"Chobley people had better look after their pro-

perty, if such folks are to be encouraged," said Mr. Crabberley.

"I don't know what excuse she may have for her crime," said the Rector; "but if she were ten times the sinner that she is, I would not refuse her a trifle this frosty Christmas time. Listen, Mr. Crabberley," continued the Rector; "I know you better than you know yourself. You are not a happy man, in spite of that money which you have spent your life in getting. You have chosen to be harsh and uncharitable towards your fellow-men, and a heavy punishment has fallen upon yourself. You cannot bear the sight of a good action, because it is against your own nature to do one. The cheerfulness of this season troubles you—not because you despise it, as you affect to do; but because, in your secret heart, you contrast it with your own isolation and gloomy humours, and envy it. From the bottom of my heart I pity you, and would help you if I could: for you have never known the pleasure of doing a kindness to another. Try it, and you will have found a new world. Depend upon it, it is easier to be happy than you think!"

The Rector, having delivered this speech, went on his way, and left the old man so much surprised at the suddenness of his rebuke, that he had not a word to answer.

"Very pretty," he said, sneeringly, as soon as the Rector was out of hearing. "These parsons think themselves at liberty to rate us all." But Mr. Crabberley felt the truth of his words, and remembered them.

Christmas at "Crabberley House" had passed away drearily as usual. It wanted very few days to the New Year. Mr. Crabberly had been out the whole day, collecting the rents of his quarterly tenants. A fog had been creeping up from the marshes all that afternoon, and was gradually getting deeper in the streets of Chobley. "Crabberley House" was on the high road at the entrance to the town; and as its surly proprietor left the lights of the shops behind him it grew so dark that he could scarcely see the miserable oil lamps on the other side of the roadway. His house was hidden from passers-by by a buttressed wall, topped with bushy ivy. The green-painted gate, which the Chobley minstrels had contrived to open on the night when they had annoyed him with the "Song of the Shepherds," had a small square grating in the middle, through which a tall man might get a glimpse of the house and grounds. As Mr. Crabberley was feeling about for the latch, or for the pear-shaped handle of the bell-pull, he heard voices through this opening. He recognised them in a moment.

"Oh, oh!" he muttered to himself; "it's young Chilcote, the schoolmaster, talking to my daughter. Now, I wonder what he wants here again."

"I must tell my father," said Alice, in a low voice; "and if he is angry with us, you must never come to see me again."

"And what will he say, Miss Alice?" asked the schoolmaster, anxiously. "Will he not say that I am not rich enough to love his daughter?"

"I must tell my father," said Alice.—Page 134.

"I do not know," said Alice. "He spoke of you the other day, and was vexed because you had written a speech for the carol-singers. How I wish that you had never told me of this."

"Oh, Alice!" exclaimed Chilcote; "this will be the saddest New Year in my life."

"I think it will," muttered old Crabberley, as he drew aside to escape observation. He heard the gate open, and saw the form of a man come forth, and disappear in the fog. Mr. Crabberley waited a moment, and then rang the bell. Old Margaret opened it. He passed through the hall into his dining-room, where he found Alice, sitting thoughtfully before the fire, with her work lying half-finished on a little table beside her. Her father noted traces of weeping on her face; but he said nothing. Alice spoke little at dinner-time, and the old man resolved not to speak of what he had heard, but to wait for her to tell him of the schoolmaster's declaration.

"Has any one called, Alice?" he said at length, by way of reminding her of her determination. Poor Alice wanted no reminder. She had been thinking of it all the dinner-time, and trembling for the issue.

"No one but Mr. Chilcote, father," said Alice, tremulously.

"Chilcote is always calling, lately," said her father. "What does he want?"

"He came to speak to you about recommending his school to Sir Harry Meltall," replied Alice, still temporising.

"Was that all?" inquired her father.

"No, my dear father, that was not all," said Alice, summoning courage for her confession. "I will hide nothing from you. He told me that he loved me."

"And what answer did you return?" replied the old man, pale with anger.

Alice hung down her head, and burst into tears.

"Chilcote shall receive such a letter from me," said the old man, "as shall make him repent of his insolence. Give me a candle!"

Alice did so, and her father left her, still weeping, and looking at the blazing fire.

"Crabberley House" had originally been occupied as a school, and had passed into Mr. Crabberley's hands on the failure of its proprietor. At the bottom of a narrow passage on the ground-floor was a door leading into the old schoolroom, which had been added to the house some years after it had been built. This room was very large and lofty; but its new proprietor only made it a kind of office, using the old schoolmaster's desk, in one corner, as a writing place. The boys' desks and forms had been long since removed; but the room still bore traces of having been a schoolroom. A few dusty and discoloured roller maps were suspended around the walls; and long cobwebs hung from the ceiling. Here Mr. Crabberley would sit for hours alone, poring over his account-books, by a solitary candle, that left all but the corner where he sat, in darkness.

On this night he shut himself in as usual, put a light

to the wood in his German stove, and sat down to write a letter to the unfortunate schoolmaster. He had finished his task to his own satisfaction, and was entering the receipts of rent for that day in his ledger, when his servant, Margaret, announced to him that young Mr. Meltall, the son of Sir Harry, desired to speak with him. Mr. Crabberley rose to meet his visitor; but he was already on the threshold.

"Walk in, Mr. Meltall," said he. "It is rather dingy here; but I like to be quiet."

"Not at all," said the young officer; "it is a very lively and agreeable retreat. In a few hours I would turn it into as pretty a ball-room as you ever saw. I would stick a dozen or two of candles about, sweep all the cobwebs down, and hang mistletoe in their place. I would have such a merry party here on New Year's Eve as should put our people's festivities at Meltall House to shame." Young Meltall generally rattled on in this manner; but Mr. Crabberley was the land-agent of his father, Sir Harry, and he was unwilling to offend his son by showing displeasure.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Meltall," inquired the old man, rubbing his hands over the German stove.

"Mr. Crabberley," said his visitor, bestriding a chair with his face to the back, "I believe there are a good many poor persons in Chobley?"

"I dare say there are," said Mr. Crabberley.

"Decent, deserving sort of people, eh?"

"An idle, improvident set, mostly," replied Mr. Crabberley.

"Ah, well, never mind," said Mr. Meltall; "I must give away a little in the town. I shall be of age soon, and it makes one popular."

"Of course, you'll do as you please," grunted the old man.

"I'll tell you frankly, Mr. Crabberley," resumed the young man, "that I have every desire to do these people a service; but I haven't the time to go looking about for them. Upon my honour, I have so much to do, that I have never been able to get a day's shooting since I have been down here. I assure you that is a fact," continued Mr. Meltall, with the air of a martyr.

"And how can I help you?" inquired Mr. Crabberley.

"I will tell you," said Mr. Meltall; "you know Chobley people better than I do. Now, if you will find out some notorious cases of distress—something, you know, that all the town talks about—and will just give an order to my banker, signed with your name——"

"Upon my word, Mr. Meltall," interrupted the old man, "I don't know how to set about such a task. I don't, indeed."

"You can do it," said the young man, springing from his seat; "and I shall depend upon you to manage the thing well. Give away twenty pounds, or so, judiciously, and you will really be doing me a service."

"But, sir ——" remonstrated Mr. Crabberley.

"Pooh!" interrupted his visitor. "I know what

you are going to say. You are quite mistaken. There is not a man in Chobley, save you, that I would care to ask such a favour. You need not say whom the money comes from. The gossips are sure to find out in the long run; and it looks well to seem to want to hide it. I like to 'do good by stealth, and blush to find it *shame*'—or fame; what is it?"

In vain did Mr. Crabberley remonstrate. His visitor overwhelmed him with words every time that he attempted to speak, and at length cut short the interview by wishing him "good-night," and suddenly disappearing.

"An idiot!" said Mr. Crabberley, after carefully closing the door. "A prodigal fool, who never earned a sixpence in his life!"

A little before dusk on the following day, Mr. Crabberley went out to execute his strange commission. "The people will think me mad," he muttered to himself. "I wish I had refused that silly young fop from the first. I really don't know what to do about giving people orders for his money. I feel that I shall make myself ridiculous. I never gave away a shilling in my life. I don't approve of giving away money—I object to it on principle; and yet here am I obliged to be the tool of that young spendthrift. Mr. Hawthorne was right, when he said that I never knew the pleasure of giving. I am afraid I never shall. I wish he had sent any one but me on such an errand. And here is snow beginning to fall again! I would sooner have given three or four pounds than undertaken such a task. I shall

know better another time. I'm rather too old to be made a fool of in this manner, I think. Give me a sensible, manly duty, and I will do it; but I am not going to be made the butt of everybody at Meltall House. If he had given me the money, I think I should have found a better use for it,—and who would have been entitled to laugh then? I wish this task were ended. I will give something to the first beggar I meet: that shall be my plan."

Holding down his hat, to protect himself against a fine sleet which the wind was driving in his face, Mr. Crabberley went on grumbling in this way, till he ran against some one at the corner of a street.

"Hulloa!" he cried. "Is that you, Mary Boker? Stop! Come here, I say!" But the woman recognised his voice, and dreaded him too much to stop.

"Come here, I say!" roared Mr. Crabberley, walking after her. "Nobody's going to kill you." The woman stopped, and stood for a moment, looking towards him; while the wind fluttered her ragged shawl, and showed her bare blue arms.

"Here," said Mr. Crabberley, "you are a thief, I know; but honest folks are scarce. Take that card, and go to the Chobley Bank with it to-morrow, and somebody will give you ten shillings for it."

"If that young fool wants his money squandered, I'll manage it!" muttered Mr. Crabberley, as he hurried on, leaving the woman holding the ticket in her hand, and staring after him in astonishment.

Mr. Crabberley stopped at the gate of the workhouse.

It was getting dark, and there was no lamp near; but he noticed some dark forms huddled up against the wall. "Who are you there?" said Mr. Crabberley. "Paupers going into the house?"

One of the men looked up, and said, "We're tramps, master."

"What are you doing there?" said Mr. Crabberley.

"We're going to turn in here, for the night, master," said the spokesman; "but they won't let us yet."

"Now then, you tramps!" roared Mr. Crabberley. "Get up, all of you. There are three tickets for any one who can get them. Come, scramble! They are as good as money, if you take them to Chobley Bank to-morrow." The tramps did as he bade them, falling over each other, and fighting in the darkness, to Mr. Crabberley's great satisfaction.

Mr. Crabberley chuckled so much over the thought of this incident, that his bad humour had somewhat abated before he came to the door of the "Chobley Free Dispensary." "I'll go in here," said he. "I dare say I shall find some one to give a ticket to." He pushed open the door, and went down a narrow passage, into the apothecary's room. It was a little octagon chamber, in which the apothecary's assistant stood at a counter, and his patients sat upon a bench round the wall, waiting for their turns. A lacquered metal lamp hung by a chain from the ceiling, and its flickering light, falling upon the faces of the sick people, gave them so ghastly a look that the new-comer shuddered, and his anger and excitement passed away.

"You are busy, Mr. Rundal," he said to the apothecary's assistant.

"Rather, sir," replied the man. "We take the consumption cases to-day. There's a good deal of such complaints about."

A death-like stillness reigned in the place—only broken by the occasional hollow cough of one of the patients. They were too weak and spiritless, most of them, to converse, even in a whisper. The loud ticking of the time-piece against the wall seemed to be numbering the minutes of their lives; and the smell of the medicines made the room like a sick-chamber. Mr. Crabberley began to repent of having entered such a dismal place.

"Now then!" said the apothecary. "No. 40, bring bottles!"

A thin, pale, hollow-eyed young man, in a faded black dress coat, closely buttoned across his chest, walked feebly up to the counter, and placed a black wine-bottle, and a small phial, before the apothecary.

"Where's your prescription?" said the apothecary, sharply.

The man fumbled in his pockets; he had not brought it.

"Left it behind?" said the apothecary, coolly. "Very well. No. 41, bottles this way!" The consumptive young man made no reply, but walked slowly out.

"Seems in a bad state?" said Mr. Crabberley. The apothecary leaned over the counter, and whispered,—"If

he lives to see the New Year we shall be surprised. Sad case; but no family, fortunately."

Mr. Crabberley made no answer, but turned away, and instinctively followed the consumptive young man. "I may as well give him a trifle as those rascally tramps," thought he—"especially when it costs me nothing." He soon overtook him, creeping along like a decrepit old man.

"Hi! Mr. What's-your-name!" cried Mr. Crabberley. "Have the goodness to stop, will you?" The man turned, and halted for a while, in the falling snow, trembling with the cold.

"You are very ill, are you not?"

"Yes," said the man, in a deep, hollow voice. "But much better than I was, thank God!"

"Better, are you?" asked Mr. Crabberley.

"Yes," said the man, "getting round again—though slowly, very slowly."

Mr. Crabberley knew, by what the apothecary had told him, that the sick man deceived himself, with the strange infatuation of consumptive people drawing near their end. There was something terrible in that ignorance of his approaching fate. Mr. Crabberley felt somewhat of the awe with which men address a condemned criminal.

"Here are a couple of tickets," said he. "If you send to the Bank with them to-morrow, they will give you a pound."

The man took them mechanically: he seemed stupified. "These will get you something," continued Mr. Crab-

berley. "Mutton-broth is a good thing, I believe. I don't know. Haven't you a great coat?" The consumptive patient shook his head.

"Ah! that's bad," said Mr. Crabberley. "You ought to have saved when you were in health. There are thirty shillings more. This winter night air can't be good for you, I'm sure."

The man took them, fervently thanking his benefactor. Mr. Crabberley experienced a strange sensation as he turned away. He had never done an act from pure compassion before. He never thought of doing any one a kindness till the task was given him by another. He marvelled at his own earnestness. An irresistible impulse compelled him to turn back again.

"Hi! Mr. What's-your-name!" said he. "If you want anything again, just call or send up to me. My name's Crabberley. Any one in Chobley will tell you my house." The man thanked him again, and went on. Mr. Crabberley stood looking after him. The words of the rector on the night before smote him in a moment.—"You have never known the pleasure of doing a kindness to another. Try it, and you will have found a new world." The bells of the church pealing forth at that moment seemed to ring the words in his ear—repeating them again and again. He was ashamed to own to himself that they were true. He would not believe that he had been mistaken all his life—that the mere distribution of this young spendthrift's mock charity had taught him the secret of what is true happiness. But the long-frozen channels to his heart were

a little thawed. He felt a pleasure in the thought of returning to the dispensary, and giving away some more money among the patients there—a pleasure so great that his feet naturally took him there, and in five minutes he found himself in the apothecary's room again. He questioned the patients all round, learned their circumstances, and took down the name and address of each. The apothecary, who knew him, looked on with astonishment. Mr. Crabberley was almost ashamed to be caught acting so much out of character. He told the apothecary, by way of apology, that it was not his own money, and left a sum with him for the benefit of the charity.

Mr. Crabberley sallied forth again, like a knight-errant of old in search of distress. A strange excitement bore him on. He half suspected that he must be going mad. He had never experienced anything like it before. The wind and driving sleet only made him the more obstinately determined to go forward. Louder and louder, with every gust, came the pealing bells, repeating, again and again, the rector's words. He scarcely knew whither he was going; but his rapid walk quickly changed into a run. Flinging his arms across his chest for warmth, he hurried along a lane parallel with the High Street, and came out into the road again, on the other side of the town. An undertaker's shop stood at the corner of the lane, and the quick tapping of the coffin-maker's hammer caught his ear. Mr. Crabberley stopped and looked in, leaning on a gate across the threshold of the entrance to the shop.

"A dull task for this holiday time," he said to the man, who was whistling a cheerful tune.

"Very true," said the undertaker, without giving his hammer a pause. "But if paupers die at holiday time, they must have coffins."

"Who's it for?" inquired Mr. Crabberley.

The man looked carelessly at the lid, and read, upon a white tin plate nailed upon the bare wood, the words, "John Bowditch, aged 53."

"I know," said Mr. Crabberley. "It's the brick-maker down the lane. So he's dead, is he? Poor fellow! Good night." He turned down the lane again, and, opening a gate, took a path across the fields. It was very dark; but he guided his course by the fires in the brickfields, till he came to a low white cottage, thatched with straw. He heard no voices within, and he rattled the latch to make himself heard. The brick-maker's wife opened the door.

"Is that you, Mrs. Bowditch?" inquired her visitor.

"Yes, sir," replied the woman. "Walk in." Mr. Crabberley shuddered at the sight of the corpse, that lay, covered with a sheet, upon a shutter against the wall. He saw its rigid outline and sharp angles through the covering, and a strange vision of his own death seemed to arise before him. A feeling of awe compelled him to speak low.

"I heard you were in trouble," said he. The woman sat upon a chair, and, covering her features with her large coarse hands, burst into tears. "Cheer up,

ma'am!" said Mr. Crabberley. "I come to help you, as far as it is in my power. You shall have a little better funeral. The parish shall have nothing to do with it."

"God bless you, sir!" said the woman, brightening up. "This was my greatest trouble. I'll never forget it, as long as I live."

"Don't thank me, Mrs. Bowditch," said her visitor. "I am only giving away other people's money. Have you any children?"

"Three, sir."

"Well, we'll see what can be done. My name is Crabberley. Come to me after the funeral. There are a couple of cards. If you take them to-morrow to the Chobley Bank, you'll get two pounds. Good night!" And Mr. Crabberley, under the influence of his new excitement, suddenly vanished, and made his way across the fields again. As he had passed it before, he had guided his course by the brickmakers' fires, but on his way back he was obliged to trust to chance, for his foot-prints in the snow had been obliterated by the falling sleet and the wind sweeping the ground. He had walked for some time, and was beginning to be surprised that he did not come to the gate at which he had entered, when a voice at a distance behind him caught his ear. He stopped and listened, till he distinguished his own name.

"Here!" cried Mr. Crabberley, making a speaking-trumpet with his two hands. "Who is it?" He saw a light coming towards him, and heard the footsteps of

some one running. It was the brickmaker's widow, whom he had left so suddenly, and who had followed him with a lantern.

"Oh, Mr. Crabberley!" said the woman; "I was afraid you had missed your way! Where were you going?"

"Back to the gate in Hanger's Lane," replied Mr. Crabberley.

"Deary-me!" said the woman. "You'd have been drowned in another moment! Look here!" She held out her lantern, and there, within a few feet of where he stood, Mr. Crabberley saw a large and deep excavation, made by the brickmakers in getting clay. At a considerable depth below, he saw what seemed to be water, slightly stirred by the wind.

"There's ten feet of water there," said the woman. "It was just here that Jem Woodard and his horse were drowned when the cart fell in."

"Your voice just stopped me in time," said Mr. Crabberley. "It is like a Providence. Show me the way; for I have more business to do to-night."

Mr. Crabberley's excitement was increasing. His lucky escape seemed to him a miracle. He had already expended the young officer's twenty pounds; but he determined to continue his charitable wanderings. "All this was another's charity," he muttered. "How do I know yet that I have really felt what it is to do a disinterested kindness?" The bells were still repeating the rector's words, pealing out and dying away, as the wind rose and fell. He urged the woman several times to

make haste, till she was obliged to keep up a running walk beside him. "All right!" he said, as he came to the gate. "I know my way now. Keep up your spirits, Mrs. Bowditch. Good night!"

At the undertaker's door he stopped again; the man was still rapping the little round-headed tacks into the lid of a coffin. "Any more coffins making, Mr. Nayler?" said he.

"Only a woman and a child that died in the house," said Mr. Nayler. "Business is uncommonly slack, just now."

"Thank God for it!" said Mr. Crabberley, as he bade him good night again. At the corner of a street he paused to consider whither he should go. His brain was in a whirl, and he could scarcely collect his thoughts sufficiently to deliberate. "Let me see," said he. "I've been at the workhouse, and the dispensary, and the undertaker's. Who shall I seek next? I would like to do some real act of charity before I go home. It must not be mere money giving. I must do something. I have it! There is poor Mrs. Slacker with that distress still in her home for my rent. It is a long way, but I will walk over, and turn that man out. A broker's man is not exactly the kind of company to begin the New Year with. It was getting late before Mr. Crabberley had discharged the man in possession, and got back to the main street of Chobley. He passed the old red-bricked house which belonged to him, and noticed a light at the artist's window above. He thought of the painter's anxiety about the purchase of the picture, at

the sale on the last day of the month. "Um!" said he, "I must go and find out Skinner, the lawyer."

He had passed Skinner's house at some distance; but Mr. Crabberley did not heed that. He turned back immediately, and knocked at the lawyer's door. Skinner himself appeared, after demanding who was there, and unfastening many bolts.

"Skinner!" said Mr. Crabberley. "Do you go to Captain Curwen's sale to-morrow?"

"I do," replied the lawyer; "and so do you, don't you?"

"No," replied his visitor shortly; "I'm too busy. I don't care to go to sales this holiday time. But I want you to execute a little commission for me."

"What is it?" grunted the lawyer, who began to have doubts of his friend's sobriety.

"There's a little picture in the catalogue, 'No. 281, Landscape.' If any one bids more than five pounds for that picture, don't let them have it. I want it. It's a real Cornelius Somebody, I forget whom. I must have it. I can't sleep for want of it. Do you hear?"

Mr. Skinner eyed his visitor curiously, holding his candle up to his face.

"Are you well?" said he.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr. Crabberley. "I never was so well, in body and mind, in my life. Come to me in the morning, and I'll give you a cheque. I can't stay now."

"Very good," said the lawyer. "If you're in the same mind to-morrow, I will do it. Good night!"

The clocks were striking eleven, and all the shops closed in the town, as Mr. Crabberley hurried homewards. He could think of many more charitable projects, but it was too late to continue his wanderings that night, and he was faint and weary. When he stood at his own gate again, he seemed to have awakened from a long dream. The church bells had ceased, as if they could no longer reproach him with not knowing the pleasure of doing a kindness to another. "I have found out the secret at last," said he, "though I have lived to sixty years of age without knowing it. And all this through young Meltall's odd commission!"

Old Margaret opened the gate, and Alice met him on the threshold of the door of his house.

"We have been in alarm about you, dear father," she said. "You went out before dinner."

"Very true, Alice," replied Mr. Crabberley, kissing his daughter. "I have been so busy, that I have thought of nothing. I can't tell you where I have been now, nor what has happened. But we must all be awake early to-morrow. I mean to have a party on New Year's Eve. Such a merry company as these old walls never held. We will begin the New Year with a different life, please God. I am not the same man I was. I mean to show people that I can make merry, too, at proper seasons!"

Alice laid her head upon his shoulder, and burst into tears of joy.

"Go now to bed," said her father. "You will have much to do to-morrow. And Alice—I will not have

you unhappy another night—Chilcote shall come to our party. There is not a better fellow in Chobley than Chilcote, I'm convinced of that."

Alice rose earlier than usual the next morning. She had been dreaming all night of preparations for the party, and would have slept till late if Margaret had not awakened her. She dressed herself hurriedly, and descended with as much trepidation as if it had been her wedding-morning. It was the first time in her life that her father had thought of celebrating a New Year's Eve, and she was as joyful at the circumstance as a young child.

"How I wish Mr. Chilcote knew about it!" thought Alice. "If I could only let him know. He might run away, and go for a soldier or a sailor this very morning, before my father sends to him."

But Alice had no time for anticipating evils. She busied herself in helping Margaret with her household duties, till she heard her father's footstep on the stairs.

"A happy New Year, father!" said Alice, running to meet him. "To-morrow is the last day of the old one."

"I know it," said Mr. Crabberley; "and I feel that to-morrow night will begin my first happy year, Alice; but you will have seen many a joyful New Year's Eve before you are half as old as I am. Come along, we must not loiter. I will help you myself, and I will bring poor Mary Boker. She's honest enough, though she did carry off a stick of wood out of Farmer Springe's hedge. She will assist us, and so we shall all be busy."

After breakfast, Alice went to the poulterer's, and butcher's, and grocer's, and fruiterer's, and other shops, and gave such orders for Crabberley House that the shopkeepers asked her twice, to be sure that they were not mistaken. Mr. Crabberley sent to the bookseller's for a cookery-book; and read aloud the directions, while Alice and Margaret made the mincemeat pies and tarts.

"Alice!" said her father, as if suddenly struck with an idea; "young Meltall said the old schoolroom would make a good place for a large party!"

"So it would," said Alice. "I never thought of that. How strange! We will have all the cobwebs swept down, and the wall ornamented with green shrubs."

"We'll make a handsome ball-room of it," replied Mr. Crabberley. "Gridley, the decorator, shall name his own price, if he can make it look well in one day."

"It would do admirably for dancing," said Margaret.

"So it will," returned Mr. Crabberley. "We'll have a platform and musicians. Godby and his set shall come, if they are not engaged. I hope I did not offend him at Christmas."

"But who will dance, father?" said Alice.

"Chilcote and his two sisters, and Cole, his assistant, and a host of people I can think of, if I can get them to come," observed Mr. Crabberley.

That afternoon Mr. Crabberley went out again, to invite his friends to his party. He apologised for the shortness of his invitation; and, though some were engaged, yet many promised to come. The butcher, whose

fat oxen he had declaimed against only a few nights previously, was surprised to receive an order to send pieces of beef to a number of persons, whose names he gave him on a list; foremost among whom stood that of Mrs. Slacker. Mr. Crabberley did not forget his friends of the night before; and he even found time to seek for more objects of compassion. On that single day he did more acts of real charity than he had ever done in his life before.

Mr. Gridley's temporary decoration of the old schoolroom was completed that evening. The walls were hung with mirrors, and ornamented with gilt girandoles, on which wax candles peeped out of green boughs. Mr. Crabberley surveyed the preparations with complete satisfaction; and he was standing on the top of a ladder, fastening some dried flowers to the candle-holders, when the schoolroom door opened half-way, and a face peeped in.

"Done to a miracle, Crabberley," said young Mr. Meltall, advancing. "I'm glad you took my advice; though, upon my honour, I did not mean it. I hadn't the least idea of finding such a change. I just looked in to thank you for your trouble. Did not I say you could do it? You could not have spent the money better—all real, genuine cases of distress. My banker was besieged to-day; and everybody found whose account paid it. I'm quite famous in the town. What can I do for you in return?"

"Come and join our party to-morrow," said Mr. Crabberley, from the top of the ladder. "Some of the

young ladies will want partners, when we come to dance."

"I'll come, Mr. Crabberley!" shouted the young man. "I should be the most ungrateful fellow in the county if I refused. I will excuse myself at home. I'll tell them I am trying to get popular in the town."

"How strange!" said Mr. Crabberley, at breakfast the next morning—"I forgot to invite Mr. Oliver, the artist; I must go to him immediately."

The artist was sitting in his room alone, brooding over a low fire, when Mr. Crabberley entered.

"A happy New Year, Mr. Oliver!" said his landlord.

"Thank you!" said the artist. "I'm cheerful enough."

"No, you are not," said Mr. Crabberley, sharply. "You are moping."

"I have had a great disappointment, Mr. Crabberley," said the artist. "I have lost my Cornelius Schuyt this morning."

"How was that?" inquired Mr. Crabberley, who had the identical painting at home, and knew all about it.

"A fellow out-bid me, Mr. Crabberley — an old lawyer, who no more knew its value than a savage knows the use of a watch."

"Never mind!" said his visitor. "Come to our little party this afternoon, and I will make you a present of a painting that you will acknowledge to be as valuable as your Cornelius Schuyt."

The artist smiled faintly, and shook his head. But

Mr. Crabberley pressed him so long, that he promised at last to come.

A little after dark, the Chobley musicians, headed by Mr. Godby—whose harangue had been so unceremoniously arrested a night or two before Christmas—arrived in such neat apparel, that old Margaret took them for a party of guests. They placed themselves upon the platform; and Mr. Godby, turning up his wristbands, prepared to direct them. Mr. Chilcote and his sisters arrived next, followed by his assistant. Then came Mr. Wrench, the medical student, with his aunt. Mr. Meltall arrived last, having had much difficulty in escaping from what he called "the humdrum set at Meltall House." Mr. Oliver, the artist, was there, looking somewhat serious. Mrs. Boker had been respectably attired, and enlisted in the band of supernumerary servants. All the company had arrived at nine o'clock, and the feasting and dancing had made great progress before midnight. Mr. Chilcote danced with Alice so many sets, that everybody foresaw a more lasting partnership between them. Mr. Meltall employed all his London arts to fascinate the company; and Mr. Crabberley was indefatigable in promoting the happiness of his guests. He tendered a public apology to the musicians of East Chobley, for his churlish interruption of Mr. Godby's harangue, and delighted that exquisite performer on the flageolet by requesting him to continue his speech at the point where he broke off. In the course of the evening, he drew the artist aside

to look at the picture which he had mentioned; and when he removed the veil, Mr. Oliver saw that his present was the very Cornelius Schuyt that he had coveted; after which, Mr. Oliver became more cheerful, and danced many quadrilles and country dances with the medical student's aunt. "Listen!" exclaimed Mr. Crabberley, throwing up the windows, as the clock was on the stroke of twelve. The violins and flageolets ceased—the dancers stopped in the middle of a tune—and every one stood listening, as if one magic word had suddenly fixed the whole scene, silent and motionless as a great picture. Softly dropping and swelling out, as on the night when Mr. Crabberley relieved the poor consumptive patient, the merry bells began to peal. To every one, they seemed to speak of their dearest and most secret hopes.

Mr. Crabberley listened attentively till the dancers clapped their hands, the windows were closed, the violins and flageolets began, and the great picture started into life again. And thus, for many an hour after midnight, the musicians of East Chobley played; and the company danced and sang, and played forfeits, and cracked jokes, and made witty speeches, and drank the health of the host and his daughter, wishing many a happy return of that New Year's Eve!

A NIGHT OF TORTURES.

Sir Josiah Child, a wise and great man in his generation, sending out instructions from the East India Company, in the reign of King Charles the Second, imperiously told Mr. Vaux that he expected his orders were to be his rules, and not the laws of England; which were a heap of nonsense compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the government of their own private families, much less for the regulating of companies and foreign commerce.

Other persons, not so learned or so wise as Sir Josiah, came to a similar conclusion for cogent reasons. The farmers of Sussex, for instance, found it simply impossible to live unless they were allowed to export the wool of the sheep that fed upon their great downs; and even the most respectable of them became participators in a very peculiar kind of smuggling, which consisted in getting prohibited goods out of the kingdom. This owling trade, as it was called, became regularly organised in defiance of the law, and was carried on to a vast extent in Romney marshes and along the Sussex coast. The smugglers trusted the farmers, and the farmers trusted the smugglers. A kind of code of

A NIGHT OF TORTURES.

Page 158.

honour, or local morals, was established among them, and was rarely infringed on. In such a state of things —the direct creation of a foolish legislature—the revenue-officer who interfered with their business became naturally, in the people's eyes, the evil doer; while the free trader, as he was then generally called, was considered the friend of all. So widely and deeply had these feelings taken root in these parts a century and more ago, that there was scarcely a farmer, a tradesman, a clergyman, or a gentleman, who had not actively sympathised with the unlawful trade.

A curious and instructive evidence of the degree in which this spirit had spread and corrupted the minds of the people, is to be found in the history of the murder of Daniel Chater and William Galley, which occurred in the neighbourhood in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven, and which I will now relate with strict adherence to the facts, as sworn to at the trials of the murderers.

In September of that year, one John Dymond, a shepherd, and, no doubt, an agent for others, agreed with a number of smugglers to go over from the Sussex coast to the island of Guernsey, to smuggle a large quantity of tea. The smugglers named their price, and proceeded, like business-men, to execute their commission; but unusual ill-luck befel them. On the way back, they fell in with a revenue cutter, which gave chase. They were forced to run their vessel ashore, and abandon her; and the revenue-officers, though they captured no men—and were not likely to capture any

men while a farm-house or other lurking place could be found in the country—carried the vessel into the port of Poole in Dorsetshire, and lodged its cargo in the custom-house there.

Such an interference with the trade of the neighbourhood did not fail to cause considerable excitement. The ladies' lace, the landed gentleman's claret, might be cut off next; nay, the very rents of his tenants might be wanting; for, though at every burial the deceased was declared on oath to be buried in woollen dead clothes, Sussex farmers could still find no sufficient demand for their fleeces without sending them abroad. Something, it was clear, ought to be done; and, although the respectable portion of the population were disinclined to be the first to move, the bold smugglers of the county might safely reckon upon public sympathy, in any reasonable attempt to administer a lesson to the common enemy.

Towards the end of the month, a body of smugglers, to the amount of sixty and upwards, held a night meeting by torchlight in a solitary part of Charlton forest. All were well provided with fire-arms, and Dymond, the nominal proprietor of the seized cargo, was there. At this meeting a plan was arranged. Accordingly on the night between the 6th and 7th of the next month they proceeded to act. They appear to have had little fear of anything save a company of soldiers; who, being but lately posted in the neighbourhood, might be supposed to be wanting in sympathy with the general feeling of the inhabitants. To meet this difficulty, portions of

the gang were stationed at different places on the road to secure a retreat; and about thirty of the number, well armed, marched boldly into the town of Poole, seized and pinioned the revenue-officers, and broke into the custom-house. Here, to their great joy, they found the whole of their cargo of tea—about thirteen or fourteen hundred weight—a quantity in those days of very large value. This, in the midst of a large town, and by a bright moon, they loaded on pack-horses, and then rode leisurely away through the streets and along the high-road. Nor could anybody afterwards find the men, or guess their names, or say whose were the horses, or trace one ounce of the tea, or discover any one, far or near, who had seen anything or knew anything whatever of these proceedings. The lawyer shrugged his shoulders; the farmer laughed a horse laugh; the landed gentleman winked over his claret at his guest. His Majesty's proclamation, posted up at toll-gates and on fences, was torn down or daubed with mud. The local code of morals was honorably observed. Somebody may have had information to give, but no mouth was opened to give it.

Yes; there lived at that time at Fordingbridge, in Hampshire, close adjoining, a shoemaker named Daniel Chater; one of those unsocial men who are out of tune with the spirit of their time and neighbourhood—or, let us not be too hard—he may have been poor, a distraint for rent may have been hanging over him; money, by a certain day and hour, may have been absolutely necessary to save him from ruin and disgrace. This

man knew Dymond; and it happened that the smuggling escort passed at daylight, after the breaking open of the custom-house, through Fordingbridge. How little Dymond imagined that any one man in that village would be so base as to betray the party is evidenced by a touching circumstance. Seeing Chater standing in his little garden by the roadside, Dymond stopped one of the horses, dismounted, and shaking hands with his acquaintance over the fence, conversed with him for a moment. Dymond then drove on with the rest of the gang. After the king's proclamation was out, a suspicion had, somehow or other, arisen against Dymond; Chater then recalled this fact, and felt no doubt that he was one of the party. Chater accordingly opened a correspondence with the custom-house officers, one of whom, a Mr. William Galley, was despatched with a letter to Major Batten, a Sussex justice of the peace, with instructions to pass through Fordingbridge, and take Daniel Chater with him, keeping their business secret, as they hoped to escape the vengeance of the neighbourhood.

The shoemaker and his companion rode away quietly through the Sussex lanes, taking counsel with no one, till they came to Chichester, where they were forced to inquire after Major Batten. Here they heard that the justice of the peace was at Stanstead, near Rowland Castle. To this place they accordingly set out, going through Leigh, where they met some respectable men named Austin, and asked of them their way. The Austins were going in the same direction, and offered

to direct them. All this had caused delay; and, in asking after Major Batten, they had been compelled to reveal their destination to several persons—a revelation which, if the officer should happen to be known to any one in that part, would have been dangerous. But the officer had come from Southampton, many miles off, and had no apprehensions. Their prudent course, however, was clearly to go on without delay upon their business; but, coming into the village of Rowland Castle on the Sunday about noon, and being hot and weary, they stopped at the White Hart, a good inn kept by Elizabeth Payne, widow, who had two sons, blacksmiths, in the same village. Payne is still a common name in these parts, and Widow Payne's family had no doubt too deep a root in the neighbourhood to be without the common feeling of the place and time. She had her misgivings about these men. One of them, at least, was a good judge of rum. While the two new comers were eating and drinking, she called Austin, their recent guide, aside, and told him "she was afraid they were come to do the smugglers hurt." This offensive suspicion had never crossed the mind of Austin. He told her they were going to Major Batten's —that he "did not suspect any harm, for they were merely carrying a letter to the Major."

This, however, only convinced Widow Payne of the correctness of her surmises, and she privately sent one of her blacksmith sons, who was then in the house, for two men named William Jackson and William Carter, who lived hard by. While the son was gone Chater

and Galley wanted to be going, and asked for their horses; but Mrs. Payne told them that the man was gone out with the key of the stables, and would be home shortly, which, it is supposed, was but a trick of hers to occasion delay. As soon as Jackson came in he called for a "pot of hot," and while that was getting ready, Carter arrived. Mrs. Payne immediately took them aside, and told them her suspicions concerning the two strangers, who were going with a letter to Major Batten. She then advised George Austin to go away about his business, telling him "as she respected him, he had better go, and not loiter about, lest he should come to some harm." Upon this hint he promptly went away.

Things soon began to look still more ominous for the officer and his friend; but, with a strange infatuation, they lingered, drinking while waiting for the stable key. So far from taking alarm at the number of men who now came dropping in one after the other, they congratulated themselves on finding so much good company, and smoked and drank till their business almost faded from their minds. Dusk was coming on, and, although not drunk, they were hardly in a fit condition to deliver themselves on important business to a military gentleman, and a justice of the peace. Chater grew sleepy-eyed, and talked foolishly about himself and his own cleverness, and of what great men had been shoemakers. Jackson, taking advantage of this, walked with him into the garden, and asked him how he did, and where Dymond, the shepherd, was. Chater said he believed he was in custody, but where or how he did

not know; adding like a fool, as indeed the drink had made him, "that he was going to appear against him, which he was sorry for, but could not help it."

Galley soon after came into the garden, suspecting that Jackson was persuading him not to persist in giving information against the smugglers, and upon Galley's desiring his friend to come in, Jackson said, "What is that to you?" and, being a powerful man, he struck the unfortunate revenue-officer a blow, which set his mouth and nose bleeding, and knocked him down. Galley then incautiously said he was the king's officer. Jackson replied, with another oath, "You a king's officer! I'll make a king's officer of you; and, for another gill, I'll serve you so again." Offering to strike him again, one of the Paynes cried, "Don't be such a fool; do you know what you are doing?"

The two strangers now became uneasy, and wanted, at all risks, to be going; but Jackson, Carter, and the rest of the smuggling party persuaded them to stay, and drink more rum, and make it up; for they were sorry, they said, for what had happened. Night having now overtaken them, it would be very inconvenient to go on to their destination. They decided to stay, and the party sat down again together.

It was near the time for closing the door of the White Hart, but the whole of the guests remained. Their number had increased—and this fact alone ought to have alarmed the officer and his companion still more; but they were now fast losing all fear. Chater bragged of being the only friend of the Government in

the whole neighbourhood, and talked of bringing down the smugglers very soon; and, sometimes, in his foolish eyes, the room became a court of law, in which he held forth, to a misty-looking judge and jury, upon the wickedness of smuggling; for, blinded by his drunken folly, he did not see the darkening faces of the men about him, nor note the ominous silence in which they listened to his vague words. Nor was Galley more sober, although, with the habitual prudence of his profession, he nudged his friend from time to time, and bade him hold his tongue. In this state, the two were at last led up to bed.

And now the White Hart doors are closed; the place is silent, and the lights are out, save in one room—the room in which the strangers had been sitting—where the company that they had left there still lingered, not a man of them offering to stir. Something was in the minds of all; although, perhaps, even the most daring knew not exactly what was to be done. Nor did any vision visit the two strangers, with a sudden shudder through the blood, to rouse them from their drunken sleep, or warn them of the horrors of that night.

After a while, two of the gang stole upstairs, listening at the door. Hearing the snoring of the sleeping men, they entered the room. Here they found Galley and Chater, lying in their clothes upon their bed; and, gently moving Chater, who was much too sound asleep to heed them, they took from his pocket the letter to the justice. This was quietly brought down, and read in the kitchen to the smugglers, to whom it revealed

exactly the bearer's errand. This inflamed their rage still more; and they held a consultation as to what was to be done. One proposed to take them both to a well near the house, to murder them, and to throw them in. One, more humane, offered to take them prisoners, and send them over to France; but that was objected to, as there was a probability of their coming back and betraying everything. Another said, if the company agreed, he would take them away to some place, where they should be confined till it was known what should be the fate of Dymond, the shepherd; and, in the meantime, all should allow threepence a week to support them; determining that whatever might be Dymond's fate, theirs should be the same. But the majority were in no mood for such tenderness or trifling. The wives of both Jackson and Carter were present, and Jackson's wife sprang up, and, with a furious gesture, exclaimed, "Hang them like dogs! Don't they come to hang us?" But even this was far from satisfying their cruel purpose.

Jackson began the movement. He went up into the room in which the two men were lying, and having deliberately fastened a large pair of spurs on his horseman's boots, he sprang upon the bed, and began to strike the sleepers on the face and forehead with the rowels, till they were covered with blood; beating them at the same time with a short, thick horsewhip, and calling upon them to get up. The unfortunate men sprang out of bed, and found themselves seized at once, and dragged down into the room below. Prayers for

mercy brought them only oaths and blows, and warnings to be silent. The smugglers then took them out of the house; but one of their number returned, with a pistol cocked in his hand, and swore that he would shoot through the head any person who should mention what he had seen or heard.

Meanwhile, having taken their horses from the stable, and stripped the two men of their coats (which were found afterwards stained with blood by the roadside), they placed them both upon one of the horses, tying their legs together under his belly; Jackson having asked particularly for a belt, or a cord for that purpose. In this condition they proceeded a little way, when Jackson, who was like a furious maniac, cried out, "Whip 'em, cut 'em, slash 'em, damn 'em." And then all fell upon them with whips, save the one who was leading the horse; for the roads were so bad that they were obliged to go slowly. Thus they tortured the men till they came to Woodash, which was only half a mile from the place where they began. Here their victims, writhing with the pain, fell off, with their heads under the horse; their legs, which were tied, appearing over the back. When their tomentors found this, they set them upright again, and continued whipping them over the head, face, and shoulders, till they came to Dean, about half a mile further; the horse still going at a very slow pace, and stumbling over the rutty-broken roads, which increased their agony. Here they slipped, and fell under the horse, as before, with their feet in the air.

This time, however, they were too weak to sit upon the horse at all; upon which their tormentors separated them, and two of the smugglers mounted upon the horses, one took Chater, and the other Galley, on his back, where the torture was continued, till the two smugglers, themselves receiving some of the blows, called out to the others to desist. All this time Jackson rode beside the two men, with a pistol cocked, swearing that if they groaned loudly, he would blow their brains out. They then agreed to go up with them to Harris's well, in Ladyholt Park, which was the property of John Caryll, a Catholic gentleman, and a friend of the poet Pope. Here they took Galley from the horse, meaning to throw him down into the well. The wretched man rejoiced at this, begging them to dispatch him at once. But the fiend Jackson said, with a fearful oath, "No! If that's the case, we must have something more to say to you." They then put him on the horse again, and whipped him over the downs, till he fell off once more, and they laid him across the saddle with his breast downwards, as a butcher does a calf, and one squeezed him in a way so horribly cruel, that the poor fellow groaned very much, and cried aloud that he could not bear it; and at last said, "I am falling, I am falling." One of the gang, giving him a push, he fell heavily, and some thought he had broken his neck, and was dead; although, from a horrible circumstance afterwards discovered, it was known that he was not.

It should not be forgotten, in considering these barbarities as an indication of the feeling against the

revenue-officers in those days, that not one of these men had any direct interest in the case of Dymond and the smuggled tea, which had been taken out of the custom-house at Poole, a place further distant from them than London, and separated by a whole county. Nor were they, in the usual sense, smugglers, or importers of smuggled goods; but were only persons interested in smuggling more or less.

Supposing Galley to be dead, they then laid him upon a horse; and, as they were going up a dirty lane, one said, "Let us seek a place to carry them to." So little were they afraid of witnesses, that they went to the house of one Pescod, and, knocking at the door, the daughter came down; when they said they had got two men whom they wanted to bring into the house. The girl told them her father was ill. But they insisting that she should go up and ask him to let them in; she did, and brought down word that her father would suffer nobody to be brought there; and the men returned to their companions.

It was now some hours past midnight; the weather being very raw and cold. Coming to the village of Keeke, they went boldly and knocked up the landlord of the Red Lion there, and his family, who came down and made them a fire, and got them food. They told the landlord that they had had an engagement with some officers, had lost their tea, and were afraid that several of their people were killed. The body of Galley they kept concealed in a brewhouse at the back of the premises. When they had refreshed themselves, they

went away; but one of them shortly afterwards came back to the landlord and asked him if he could find out a place hard by where he had before concealed some goods. The landlord said he remembered it, but he could not go with them. The smugglers insisted he should; and they then took a candle, a lantern, and a spade, and went away together, and joined the rest. Coming to the spot they were in search of—a miry hollow, deep down among briars and withered leaves—they began to dig a hole, the landlord of the Red Lion working with them. His excuse afterwards was, that "it being a very cold morning, he helped, and did not think what it was for." Into this hole they hastily thrust the body of Galley, all cut and bruised, and in his blood-stained clothes—dead, as they thought him; but a terrible evidence was afterwards found that, even now, some life remained, for his hands were discovered held up to his face, as if to keep the dirt, as they shovelled it upon him, out of his mouth and eyes.

Thus did poor Galley at length find release from his barbarous enemies. Terrible as was his fate, however, it was milder and more merciful in its speedy end than that which befell the shoemaker, who had bragged at the White Hart so boldly of his deeds. When they had buried Galley, all the party, save two, returned to the Red Lion, and there sat eating, drinking, and smoking the whole of the day. The two that had not joined them were sent in charge of Daniel Chater, their remaining victim; who being the informer, and the chief cause of the betrayal of the tea-smugglers, they

determined to submit to even worse torture than his companion had endured. Mills, an old man, and his companion, accordingly took Chater to a place called a skilling, or turf-house, belonging to Mills, in a solitary place on the border of a wood. Here they fastened their prisoner by a heavy iron chain, about three yards long; where, all day long, the smoke of burning peat curling under his eyes and nostrils, save when a breath of wind came to his relief, made him grievously sore, and almost choked him. On the Wednesday, being the third night after the outrage at Rowland's Castle, the whole gang met again at the Red Lion, to consult what further cruelties to inflict on Chater, who was still alive. One of the number said, "Let us load a gun, clap the muzzle to his head, and we will tie a long string to the trigger, when we will all of us lay hold of it and pull it!" But this was rejected, "as it would put him out of his pain too soon." Finally, they came to the resolution of carrying him up to Harris's, in Ladyholt Park, there to treat him as they had intended to treat Galley.

All this while Chater was suffering the most horrible torture; being continually visited by one or other of his enemies, who swore at him and struck him cruel blows. When at length the whole party came down to the turf-house, Tapner, one of them, pulled out a huge clasp-knife, and dancing and gesticulating like a madman, rushed at the unhappy man, who was still chained, crying, "Down on your knees to prayers!" The poor shoemaker accordingly knelt down slowly and feebly

on the turf, and began to pray; but, while he was so engaged, one of their number went behind him and kicked him, upbraiding him for being "a preaching villain," and saying, "We have done for Galley, and we will do for you!" Then Tapner, without any provocation from the poor man—who was, indeed, now too weak and wretched even to complain—rushed at him again, and drew his knife across his nose, whereby he almost cut both of his eyes out. Still, the wretched creature only uttered a groan, and bent his head; but Tapner, not yet satisfied, rushed at him in another fit of frenzy, and struck him again, but this time a little higher, so that the knife made a deep gash across his forehead.

They then placed him on a horse, and set out for Harris's Well, Tapner whipping him all the way, till seeing that he was bloody, he went up to him, and swore if the blood should stain the saddle he would destroy him instantly. Thus, in the dead of the night, they came up to the well in the park, which was between twenty and thirty feet deep, and paled round to keep the cattle from falling in. Tapner then pulled a cord out of his pocket, and tied it with a noose round the neck of their victim, and bade him get over the pales to the well. The poor man, scarcely unwilling to obey, seeing an opening occasioned by some decayed pales, would have gone through this, but was prevented by the others, who swore he should get over, having all the while the rope round his neck, and being extremely weak.

As soon as he had got over the pales, Tapner took

one end of the rope and tied it round the rail in the opening where the pales were broken, there being no roller to the well, which was dry and abandoned. They then pushed him into the well; but the length of the rope would not suffer his body to hang above knee-deep in it, so that the upper part appeared above the low brick parapet, hanging by the rope about the neck. Here, however, as his body leaned against the wall, the weight did not strangle him; and, after a quarter of an hour, they got over, cut the rope, and dropped the body, head foremost, down. They then listened, and could still hear him groan. At this they went to a man who was a gardener, and woke him up, and asked him to lend them a ladder and a rope, which he did; but they could not move the ladder, and returned without it to the well, where they could still hear the unfortunate Chater feebly moaning. At this, they procured two old gate-posts that were lying on the ground within the park, which they cast down, together with some heavy stones; when, listening again, they could hear nothing, and were satisfied that he was dead. After this they killed the horse that they had stolen, took his hide off, and cut it into small pieces, and made away with them to prevent any discovery. Galley's body was not found till long after. Chater, when discovered in the well, presented a piteous spectacle, with the rope about his neck. His eyes appeared to be cut or picked out; his boots and spurs were on, but one of his legs "came short off" when they lifted the body.

At least fifteen persons were actively engaged in these

horrible proceedings. Many others had been openly spectators of much that had been done, and had rendered assistance to the murderers, while, for three days, they had gone about the country; but the Government could obtain no tidings whatever of the missing men. Galley's coat being found all blood-stained by the roadside, as we have stated, it was imagined that they had been either murdered or carried abroad by the smugglers; but how no one appeared to know. A proclamation was issued, with a large reward; but, for seven months, no information was received as to who were the murderers. At length, however, in the usual course of such histories, a magistrate received a letter from one who had witnessed some part of their proceedings; and, shortly afterwards, one of the murderers coming in, and voluntarily surrendering himself, probably from fear of the rest, he became king's evidence, and the greater number were tried and sentenced to be hanged—some of them in chains.

While awaiting their execution, being all ironed and stapled down and well guarded, most of them behaved with extreme levity, eating and drinking regularly without any seeming concern, and talking freely to the people who, according to the custom of the time, were allowed to come in and see them. One of the prisoners, an old man of sixty, asked the clergyman, gaily, when he thought they should be hanged. Being reproved, he answered that, "According to the common course of nature, he could not have lived above a year or two longer; that, as to the murder, it gave him little trouble, as he had but small hand in it. As to the charge

of smuggling, he owned he had been concerned in that trade for a great many years, and did not think there was any harm in it." His son said, "He was not present when the murders were done; though, if he had, he should not have thought it any great crime." One said, he "had had many engagements with the revenue-officers, and been wounded three times." Another, when told they must go up to receive judgment, "What a devil do they mean by that? Could not they do our whole business last night, without obliging us to come again, and wear out our shoes?" But there were some less hardened; and Jackson, one of the cruelest of the number, was no sooner measured for the chains in which he was to be hung, than he was struck with such terror that he died in two hours after. The old man, Mills, however, was unchanged to the last. He cursed the executioner for making him stand on tiptoe, and bade him "not hang him by inches."

We live in a better age; but many foolish customs are still entered into our revenue commissioners' book, violating great principles, and needlessly perpetuating the smuggler's trade—duties upon articles of two or three times greater amount than the value of the goods themselves, most of these articles comprising, like tea and brandy, a large value in a small bulk. The risk of carrying such things, like all other risks, may be exactly estimated and insured against, at a certain price. When this price is less than the duty, smuggling, in spite of custom-houses and coast-guards, will go on, the revenue will be cheated, and the bold smuggler retain some shadow of his old popularity.

GOING HOPPING.

Loitering upon the old stone bridge over the Medway, in the town of Maidstone, early in a misty autumn morning, I miss the ancient church and row of poplars, which I know should be somewhere near upon the left. They will not come out of their white shroud until noon; and if then, perhaps, only to enfold themselves in it again an hour or two later. The water flows on, smooth and noiseless, till it splits upon the sharp wedges of the piers, and runs away whispering under the arches; but beyond this, not a ghost of a noise is abroad. All Maidstone is asleep, except a railway porter, a man driving a cow who went over the bridge a minute or two ago, and myself. There may be somebody up at the baths behind me: I cannot see. But the old, bruised, and battered coal-barge, moored alongside the wharf, in which I believe live a man and his wife, seems to have nobody aboard—for no smoke ascends from the stove-pipe at the helm. Slowly creeping down this way—a thin ghost at first, then a dusky spectre, then a green and yellow barge—comes the Sarah Ann, of Aylesford. Down drops the huge tawny mainsail as she steers for the middle arch, just above which I am standing, leaning upon the parapet:

and now, with all her wings close folded, she shaves to a nicety the sides of the arch. She is gone: but what is this rich odour she has left behind? Not spikenard nor olibanum could be more grateful to my nostrils, than that rich, balmy, healthful, bitter smell that floats about me now, and makes this place no common bridge of stone. The Sarah Ann is freighted with Kentish hops: many a precious pocket of that noble plant lies down in the dark, beneath a yellow tarpauling spread over her hatchway. But, like the thoughts of a good man, who suffers imprisonment for the whole world's sake, its subtle essence steals abroad, and lives in the free air.

Hops coming into my head in this manner, remind me of the business of to-day: for though I have the air of a veritable lounger, and though the overtasked railway porter, going to his work at this early hour, looked at me enviously and thought I led a nice lazy life of it, I, too, have a task to accomplish. The railway porter, if he knew anything of signals off the line, might have known that to be astir thus early does not mean idling. I have a letter in my pocket for Mr. Day, the hop-grower of East Farleigh, charging him, in the sacred name of friendship, to show and make clear to me everything connected with the cultivation and preparation of hops. So, after more loitering on the bridge, and more sauntering in the town (for I deem it well to let my mind lie fallow a few hours, before receiving that broadcast of facts with which it is to be sown), I come to the bridge again, and cross the river

winding through the brown and yellow woods up to East Farleigh.

There are in all England some fifty or sixty thousand acres of hop plantations; and of those one-half at least are in this county alone. In the oldest book I know about hops (Reynolde Scot's 'Perfite Platforme of a Hoppe Garden'), dated 1574, and printed in black letter, with many prefaces terminating in inverted pyramids of type, Kent is spoken of as the county of hops. The system of cultivation appears to have little changed since then; and the book, if it were not written in the style of an Act of Parliament, and interlarded with moral reflections and allusions to every poet and orator of ancient times, might have been written in the present day. Yet hops, at that date, were but of recent cultivation. For ages, while our ancestors were wont to flavour their ale with ground ivy, and honey, and various bitters, a weed called "hop" had been known about the hedges of England; but no one thought to cultivate it for brewing until the beginning of the sixteenth century. Some say the cultivated plant came first from Flanders, where it was certainly used before our brewers knew its virtues. The Chinese, of course, are supposed to have known all about it ages before that. In France, hop-gardens are very ancient. Mention is made of them in some of the oldest records, though what their hops were used for does not appear. In England it had many enemies to contend with at first. Slanderers said it dried up the body and increased melancholy; and though the very

reverse is the fact, this belief so far prevailed, that we find in the household regulations of Henry the Eighth an order to the brewer not to put any more hops in the beer: and at a much later period, the Common Council of the City of London petitioned Parliament against the use of hops, "in regard that they would spoil the taste of the drink, and endanger the people."

There are not five parishes in Kent—large or small—that have so many acres of hops as this little parish of East Farleigh, where I am going. There is no place in all England whose hops will fetch a better price—not excepting Farnham, in Hampshire, whose patch of hop plantation, standing almost alone in the county, has slightly lost its reputation as the queen of hop-gardens, since its limits have been extended into a less favorable soil. At East Farleigh dwelt the Rothschild of hop-growers, whose hop-poles alone were said to be worth fifty thousand pounds; and there dwell his descendants still, though their grounds are little more than a tithe of his. The luxuriance of hops about here is a puzzle to theoretical agriculturists. "Though rich mould," says Bannister, "generally produces a larger growth of hops than other soils, there is *one* exception to this rule, where the growth is frequently eighteen or twenty hundred per acre. This is the neighbourhood of Maidstone, a kind of slaty ground with an understratum of stone. There the vines run up to the top of the longest poles, and the increase is equal to the most fertile soil of any kind."

Hops, in England, invariably grow up poles. In the

north of France they are sometimes made to creep upon copper wires, ranged horizontally, like the lines of the electric telegraph; but Kentish farmers, when they hear of it, shake their heads. These poles stand in groups of three or four, at a distance of about six or seven feet apart; and nearly three thousand (worth, if good ones about seventy-five pounds) are required for an acre of ground. In some counties, hops are set between fruit trees in orchards; and penny wise and pound foolish growers will plant vegetables between the poles; but Kentish growers know that the hop requires all the strength of the soil, and rigidly exclude everything that could impoverish it, except in the first two years after planting, when the bines never produce any flowers worth picking. The only plant cultivated is the female hop; the male species, sometimes called "blind hop," being of no value; though it is said that if the male hop were excluded from the garden, the flowers throughout the ground would be wanting in that yellow powder called the "farina," or "condition," which is their chief virtue. For this reason, one male hop plant in every hundred groups is generally planted. Of the hop cultivated there are eight or ten varieties, of which that called "Goldings" is the best; but this, from its very luxuriance, is subject to diseases which poorer but more hardy kinds will escape. Some of each sort are, therefore, generally planted; though the spirit of gambling which pervades this branch of farming will induce others to run the risk of growing only the better kind. After that well-known Natural History, in

which Mr. Mavor shows how the horse, from his mane to his hoofs, is "very useful to man," I may here mention that the young shoots of the hop plant are eaten as a substitute for asparagus; that an infusion of its flowers will dye wool yellow; and that from the stalks, dressed in the manner of flax, a strong cloth is made in Sweden; so that some genius among hop-growers may one day turn the bines which are now wasted into hop-pockets; and may make the stalks carry the flowers to market. An enthusiastic writer, who calls it "a very elegant balsamic bitter," declares that it may be employed medicinally in the shape of powders, tinctures, extracts, infusions, decoctions, conserves, plain and compound pills, juleps, and apozems; and that under one or other of those forms, it will infallibly cure hypochondria, cleanse kidneys, restore livers, purify blood, remove spleen, stop colic, kill worms, dispel jaundice, eradicate scurvy, and destroy gout, regular or atonic. If only half of this is true, no one can deny that the hop plant is "very useful to man." Its flowers, however, are known to be a powerful soporific. A pillow of hops recommended for the late King George the Third, in his illness of 1787, was found to produce sleep when all other means had failed: a secret which was not known to his ancestor King Henry the Fourth, when he uttered that beautiful soliloquy upon sleep which was heard by some good spirit in the lonely sick chamber, who afterwards whispered it to the poet that it might not be lost.

Emerging from the woods, just as the mists are

creeping away, and the sun is turning from a dull red ball of fire to something like itself again, I see nothing but hops on each side of the river. All up the sides of the valley their heavy clusters, topping the high poles, peep one over the other, like spectators' heads in the pit of a theatre. And now I spy the stone bridge with its four pointed arches, where water, running down the wooden flooring of an inclined plane, foams and roars all day and all night; though a little girl at a cottage tells me she cannot hear it at times—losing it by long habit, as you lose the ticking of a clock in a room, by listening to it. And there, a few yards above the bridge, struggling for a place among the hop-grounds, stands the old church of East Farleigh, like three barns with a pointed spire. And here I stop, and leave the river to wind away and hide itself in a perfect forest of hop plantations.

While my host runs his eye along the lines of my letter, I read in his face that the sacred name of friendship will not have been invoked in vain. He does not think of hinting that Saturday is a busy day; but, on the contrary, congratulates me upon having chosen that day, as presenting some features in hop-picking not to be seen on any other. So we walk together through the hop-garden, where the strong bitter odour and the bright yellow of the clusters, tell that they are ripe, till we come to a stubble-field, and find the pickers at work upon the borders of the plantation. Men, women, and children all pick hops. This is why this employment is preferred by those wandering bands who cut hay in the

spring and corn in the summer, and in the winter live, or die, no one knows where. But these are by no means the only class that come hopping. Labourers, costermongers, factory girls, shirt-makers, fishermen's boys, watermen, and, they tell me, even clerks out of employment, all throng the Kentish highways at this time, attracted by the opportunity of earning a couple of shillings per day; and still the cry is more; and the farmer, in plentiful seasons, is frequently embarrassed for want of hands.

Pickers of hops escape their soporific influence. There is no going to sleep with them; though they handle and smell and breathe hops from dawn till sunset. The man who, with his instrument—which he calls a hop-dog, because it is a hook on one side and a knife on the other (he cannot tell me any better reason)—cuts the bine about the roots, and then hooks up pole, bine, and all, and lays it across the pickers' bins, has enough to do to keep ten pickers supplied. A sullen-looking girl—her hair growing low down her forehead—grumbles at being kept waiting a moment. So does another young woman, who has brought her infant family with her in a covered child's waggon—urged on by a surly murmur from a wild young man, with white hair and eyebrows, who speaks a brogue which is neither Irish, Scotch, Yorkshire, nor West country, and who, being asked, "What countryman are you?" replies with a noise in his throat sounding like "Gurz'n," and then grins; and being asked again, "Where that is?" answers "Gurz'n," and grins again:

after which the questioner gives up all hope of discovering what countryman he is. But a merry old woman, with a red face, says something which I did not catch, and everybody laughs, and good humour is restored. Meanwhile the cutter makes a desperate attack upon the poles; felling them so fast that he has time to pull out a handkerchief and rub the perspiration from his forehead; and the surly young woman admits that "he is keepin' the pot a-bilin:" and now everybody is busy. Down comes a hop-pole, and away goes a swift hand up it, plucking the flowers into a canvas bin upon a wooden frame, carefully avoiding the leaves till it gets near the top of the pole, when with one stroke it rubs off all that remain, the few little green leaves at top doing no harm. The pole, with the bine stripped of its flowers, is then thrown aside, just as the cutter, who has served eight or nine in the interval, drops another pole across the bin. Each of these bins, I am told, holds fifteen or twenty bushels, which is as much as the fastest hand can pick in a day. The lower parts of the poles—which are rotted by being in the earth—are then cut away, and the poles will be carefully stacked to serve for shorter plants next year.

Here are the oast-houses—most of them brick-built and perfectly circular up to a height of fourteen or fifteen feet, whence they terminate in a cone, surmounted by a cowled chimney, peculiarly shaped, to allow the vapour from the hops to escape. To what shall I compare them (for form, though not for size) if not to those curiously clipped holly-trees in the front

garden of my friend Lilypaynter at Twickenham, which, he says (being a little eccentric), were meant to represent peacocks. If they had been peacocks, who should say how he would have clipped their plumage to represent holly-trees? But that has nothing to do with hops. Some of the oast-houses are square—but that shape is old-fashioned—and some are long; for no two farmers agree in any one particular as to the treatment of hops. Even as to furnaces opinions are so diverse, and are supported by such well-balanced testimony, that I find all kinds of stoves here. Entering at a narrow aperture, and darting past the fire, through a heat that would roast me if I stood still in it, I find myself in a circular chamber about eighteen feet in diameter. In the midst, or rather, nearer to the aperture, a clear fire of coke and charcoal burns with thin hovering flames, melting into air. Dipping his hand into a barrel, my conductor brings up some rolls of brimstone; and, casting them on the fire, a bright blue glare lights up the chamber and the faces of all present. This is found to give a livelier colour to the hops, and is everywhere, except at Farnham, adopted; colour—although it is said to be not really a sign of strength—being arbitrarily insisted on by the purchaser. He knows you do it with brimstone, but he does not care how you do it, so that the hops look bright. With a slightly disagreeable taste in the throat, I escape into the next oast-house. Here the fire is enclosed in a sort of oven, quite hidden from sight. In another, I find it in a brick stove with apertures for the escape

of heat, contrived by omitting a brick here and there. These apertures are called "horses;" but, like the bine-cutter's "hop-dog," the origin of the name is doubtful. Here is a different kind of stove, in which the fire is closely shut up, and the heated air is confined and carried up to the drying-floor by an inverted hollow cone, formed of laths and clay, and lined inside with smooth tiles.

Walking out into the open air again, we mount a ladder to the cooling-room attached to the oast-house. On a circular floor, about fifty-six feet in circumference, formed of strong wire netting, and covered with coarse hair cloth, through which the warm air ascends, the hop-flowers lie to a depth of two or three feet. One thousand and fifty pounds' weight of green hops are here drying at once; but through the little aperture at the top of this sugar-loaf chamber, some eight hundred and fifty pounds of this weight will evaporate into air, so that a day's work of the fastest picker, weighing a hundred pounds when green, will scarcely weigh twenty when dry. The air is only moderately warm; but the grower, by long experience (for nothing else will make a hop-drier), knows without any thermometer that it is exactly the proper heat—considering the weather, the state of the hops, and a dozen other things. The drying never ceases during the time of picking, and is one of the most difficult branches of the preparation. A man must watch them day and night, turning them frequently, until the stalks look shrivelled, and burying his arms deep in the hops, he feels them to be dry.

This is generally after eight or twelve hours' drying, after which they are shovelled through the little door on to the adjoining cooling-floor to make room for more.

On the cooling-floor, I find a man stitching hop-pockets, whom the method of my narrative compelled me to overlook when I passed him just now. He is working on canvas hung over a line, with needles that would not go through any button-hole in the world. These hop-pockets are not so coarse as an unjust proverb would have them. Into these pockets the hops are tightly wedged; and—dusted from head to foot with the yellow powder of the hops—a man in a blouse (which used to be blue before hopping began,) is continually passing to and fro, wheeling a single pocket at a time upon a long truck, from the steps of the cooling-loft to a pair of great scales in an open shed. Here stands the supervisor, the representative of Her Majesty's Board of Inland Revenue. He is a very stout, red-faced man, with a white hat, and a brown velvet shooting-jacket, and carries a small bunch of hops in his mouth. He holds a book in his hand full of lines and figures, red and black, and looks very cross; as one who, by the stern expression of his features, would warn off all attempts at bribery of any kind. Not so his lean, but equally red-faced assistant; though, perhaps, not less incorruptible because he twits the farmer with making his fortune out of hops, and calls himself a poor devil, laughing very heartily, as if he liked being a poor devil, and only pretended to envy the

money-making hop-grower. He generally comes alone, but now and then, as a check upon him, the stout superior drops in, unexpectedly, and re-weighs what he has booked. One by one, the great pockets are rolled into the scale and rolled out again, and laid all in a row like bloated porpoises—the handles at the corners being the two short sprawling fins. Then my conductor, to expedite matters (though this is the exciseman's business), bestrides one of the porpoises, and with a basin of ink in one hand, and a small painting brush in the other, cries out, "Number?" The supervisor refers to his book, and answers, "One hundred and fifty;" and those three figures are drawn upon the animal's back, a little above the snout. "Weight?" "One, two, twelve." Down goes one hundred weight, two quarters, twelve pounds. Next, in letters four inches long (according to the statute), he adds his own name and parish, and the date, with an indignant allusion to an act intended to be passed last session; which, abolishing this part of the ceremony, would have robbed Farleigh hops of their glory in the market. Next comes one hundred and fifty-one:—weight, one, two, ten. One hundred and fifty-two:—weight, one, two, eleven. Finally, the supervisor (checking the figures) takes the brush, and marks a cross upon the seam of the mouth of the sack, to prevent frauds on the Government by afterwards squeezing in more hops. This is called "sealing," which being done, he closes his book with the intention of calling in six months' time for a duty of one penny and twelve

twentieths of a farthing per pound weight. This is called the old duty. The new duty of three farthings and eight twentieths of a farthing (making up twopence), and the additional duty of five per cent., will not be applied for till long after next year's hops are picked.

Not yet, however, is the grower sure of his profit. The hops may remain on his hands for a twelvemonth, when they will be considered as "old hops," and lose much in value. Nor can the abundance of one season find a balance in the deficiency of others. In a year or two, if kept, they will be worthless—as odourless and flavourless as mere chaff. Thus the steadiest of hop-growers—although he may never buy standing crops, selling them and buying them again (like court cards in the game of speculation), on the perilous chance of their improving or deteriorating; although he may grow hardy and luxuriant kinds; and although he may determine never to bet a sixpence on the probable amount of the duty—must look upon his business as a species of gambling, rather than as a legitimate branch of husbandry. Woe betide the man who, with too small a capital to carry him over reverses, sets up as a hop-planter! Not hooping-cough, nor measles, nor all the several ills that infant flesh is heir to, can be compared with the dangers that have threatened this crop from the time when first its tender shoots were guided to the hop-pole, till now, comparatively safe, the flowers are picked, and dried, and weighed. In the warm nights of early summer, when the bine will grow an inch within an hour, fleas and fireblasts threatened it. When

the clusters hung so large and full, that everybody (but the wary) prophesied the duty would reach an enormous figure, Egyptian plagues of green or long-winged flies, coming from no one knows where, might have settled on it, and, in a single night, turned flower and leaf as black as if they had been half consumed by fire. "Honey-dew," that frothy kind of saliva which a little insect gathers round itself, might fall upon it, and prove no less destructive. Red spiders, otter moths, and the "vermin" which spring from their eggs, might any day sit down, uninvited, to a banquet costing a couple of millions sterling to the Kentish growers alone. Any cold autumn night, "when the breath of winter comes from far away," might blight them; and, finally, mould might suddenly eat up every vestige of flower while the hops were waiting for the picker. Ah! if a tithe of the care and culture that are bestowed upon this tender plant could be devoted to some of those children of the poor classes, whose sad want of mending has been so often pointed out; if you would take a single child, as Sterne took his single captive; as tenderly provide him with a healthy spot; as carefully train his young ideas as the sprouts and tendrils of this plant are trained; as watchfully strive to keep him from all blights and harms—might you not here expect a crop more sure, and not less golden?

Throughout the year wagers are extensively laid in the counties of Kent and Sussex (but particularly in the former), upon the amount of duty annually declared by the Excise, in respect of all the hops gathered through-

out the country. Long before anything like data whereon to found a calculation can be obtained, large sums are staked upon the result of the crop. In Canterbury, Rochester, and Maidstone, are the Kentish "Tattersalls," which, together with a few of the ancient inns in Southwark (where the hop factors live, and hold their principal market), comprise the head-quarters for hop betting: although this gambling is not confined to the trade, but extends to all classes in the hop districts. Almost every tradesman and boy has, or till lately had, his "book," or his chance in some "hop club." On the publication of the amount of the duty, many thousands of pounds change hands, and every possible scheme is resorted to throughout the summer to procure the latest intelligence of the condition of the plant in the chief districts, so as to enable the more wary to increase their stakes or "hedge," as the case may be. The system is to give what is called a "scope," the extent of which depends upon the time of year. In the winter quarter, the betting man will perhaps give a "scope" of twenty thousand pounds; that is to say, will bet that his adversary will not guess the amount of duty to be declared on the next year's crop within that amount. But as the year advances, and the hop has escaped the dangers that beset its progress, the scope is reduced. Clerks in the accountant's department of Inland Revenue are much sought after, and the slightest hint greedily devoured as to the gross quantity of hops weighed; which certain men pretend to know, in much the same way as sporting prophets boast of their "office" or "tip," for the Derby.

The period between the picking and the declaration of duty is usually a full month of excitement to the parties wagering; the duty is known about the end of October.

We have something else to see. The pickers are waiting to be paid in the hop garden; for it is Saturday night. Our shadows are strangely angular and long as we walk along the stubble field again; the pickers leave off before sunset, to allow time for carrying away the hops by daylight. Their work has to be measured first. The cutter leaves off battling with the rows of poles, and comes to measure with a wicker bushel having a black line round it, outside, about half way up. For any one of these bushels, filled as lightly as possible—never quite up to the top—the picker receives twopence. When only a few hops remain at the bottom of the bin, he watches most anxiously; for if the remainder reaches beyond the black line it counts a bushel: while if it falls short, it counts as nothing. There is a delay at the sullen-looking girl's bin, for she has dropped in too many leaves, and must pick them out, one by one. Cutter "wonders she didn't put in bines, poles and all;" and bids her "look alive." When everything is done, the farmer brings his money bag, attended by a boy, who reads the amounts to be paid from a book. Most of the hands have been drawing money in the week—they don't know how much exactly, nor when; but the book assists their memories. Nobody can recollect, either, how much he has earned, but contents himself when he is informed by saying, he "thought it was ever so much more," by way of show-

ing that he is on the alert, and not to be cheated easily. The merry old woman takes her money, gaily. The sullen girl grumbles. Eager faces are crowded around the payer. There is a man with a very savage, heavy look, which has been all along fixed intently upon the money bag. "How much you?"

"Oh! you know." Book is referred to, and the savage man pounces upon fifteen shillings. "Now, then; is everybody paid?" There is a tidy, quiet, freckled-faced girl standing a little way off, whom the merry old woman spies, and says to her, "What! ain't you got no money? Why didn't you go up?" The girl replies, "I didn't like to ask for it." On this, the merry old woman drags her up to the farmer, and she, too, is paid. The pokes are wheeled off; and the cutter drains the great stone beer bottle; and the merry old woman encumbers herself with many bundles and two umbrellas; and all go talking and laughing across the field, followed by the woman drawing her infant family in the covered child's waggon.

There is a great stir and a strange noise of voices over East Farleigh to-night. In this little out-of-the-way village of some twenty houses scattered about, and with only one beer-shop, three thousand hop-pickers (chiefly Irish) are assembled. Hundreds of fires in the open air look from a distance like the encampment of an army. In huts, and stables, and out-houses; in abandoned mills; in crumbling barns and dilapidated oast-houses, whose cracks are ineffectually stuffed with straw and clay; under pents; against walls; in tents,

and under canvas awnings, this multitude cook, eat, drink, smoke, and sleep. No wonder that in the ground of the old church I find a row of grass-grown mounds, with an inscription on wood, "In memory of forty-three strangers, who died September, 1849. R. I. P. (*Requiescant in pace*)." A parishioner tells me they were all Irish hoppers; and only a portion of those who died of the cholera here in the season of that year. No inhabitant of the parish was attacked; and to the credit of the clergyman it is said, that he turned his house into a temporary hospital, and with his wife attended them night and day.

At the bridge, some are washing clothes; women, and girls, and boys, wild, ragged, uncouth people, most of them standing bare-legged in the water rinsing shirts in saucepans, and dabbing them against the smutty edges as fast as they are cleaned; boiling other clothes in cauldrons; and hanging garments that have more superficies of hole than cotton, upon the hedges. There, too, are hideous old Sycoraxes smoking and crouching over fires this warm day, and shouting unintelligible sounds to fat children, sprawling in the mud upon the shelving bank of the river. Everybody has been paid to-night, and most are off to buy provisions for the week. There is a solitary butcher's shop up the lane, with trees in front, which is besieged. Nearly all round it—for it is open on three sides—a hungry mob hustle and push and clamour to be served; and the butcher, who all the year round has not a whole sheep in his shop, now chops his way out of heaps of meat. Then

there is a lonely grocer's—lonely no more—where as great a crowd clamours for bacon, and bread, and beer, and tea, and sugar, in a great gloomy shop lit by two wretched candles. The only beer-shop overflows with disappointed customers, and the wild howl of Irish singers. Hundreds are encamped at the cross-road. Here is a double row of huts, built expressly for the hoppers, each about ten feet square, with a shelving roof, where half-a-dozen men, women, and girls, sleep together upon straw, and have a fire. There are bread stalls, and stalls of herrings in brine, and stalls of such pastry as I never beheld before. One of the huts is open on one side, and converted into a shop or stall, where you may buy bread, and candles, and such small quantities of tea and sugar, all ready done up in paper, as never were sold at any other time or place. This is the private speculation of Mr. Bleary, who is encouraged by the great hop-growers to sell provisions here at this time; they having a good opinion of his mode of doing business.

Mr. Bleary is said to be a man of property, and I am introduced to him. He is a very stout Irishman, with a moist eye, and a treble chin lapping over a white cravat, and has a chronic cold in the head; calls himself "Purvey-her in gin-ral to the strangers in Farrer-leigh;" and is neither drunk, nor the worse for liquor, but what Frenchmen familiarly call "*ému.*" He is very glad to see me, and "how are you?"—bids me follow him into his hut, or shop; and describes an arbitrary division of its only room into kitchen, par-

lour, and bed-room. "The furrerniture isn't all come down yet; but no matter." Mr. Bleary is full of anecdotes, with wrathful parentheses of "disorderly doins, and shemful robbin' of poor creeturs" by his predecessors in the business. But, coming forth and seeing his lines of customers, all sitting at long tables, drinking soup in the light of the moon, the poetry of his whole being overflows;

"Look at me happy children! All livin' in harrermony one with another; all drinkin' soup and bread, and discoorsin' together, like ladies and gentlemen, about politics and the late Juke o' Willinton. Look at me happy children! You remimber how it used to be, Misther Day? How they used to fight like so many wolves, and lie about the ground like a flock o' pigs. Therer's soup for a halfpenny a basin! Taste it. Here I stand in defiance of all docthors. Let 'em all come down to East Farrerleigh and examine it. Oh, the days before I came down here! I remimber 'em well. What shindies! There usen't to be never a sound head, nor a sound winder in all East Farrerleigh parish. And only look at 'em now. Ask 'em thimselves if they don't feel morer like Christians, and a little morer happy-minded."

And thus Mr. Bleary continues till he bids me good night; and then calls me back again, and puzzles me by asking, "What I might guess, now, to be the greatist number o' sacks o' potairtoes he ever sold in one night?" but immediately removes my difficulty by mentioning that twenty-six was the number.

Good night, Mr. Bleary! My road lies Maidstone way, beside the river shining in the full moon; and I would, for your sake, I had started an hour earlier. Then should I not have been compelled to tell how wild disorder broke out in that happy family, that night; how sticks and stockings loaded with stones were flourished, and heads and windows broken, just as in the days of old, how drunken hoppers sprawled about as if you had never come to East Farleigh, and had never sold sugar there, nor soup; and how your mild paternal admonitions were laughed to scorn.

RUTSTEAD.

Page 199.

TWELVE MILES FROM THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

THERE is a story of a soldier who once heard the great clock of St. Paul's strike thirteen times, from his post some twenty miles off, and, being accused of sleeping at midnight, was enabled entirely to clear himself by proving that the clock of St. Paul's did actually, in some eccentric fit, strike thirteen times upon the night in question. But however this may have been, no one ever heard the clock of St. Paul's in our village, let the air be ever so humid, or the wind from that quarter ever so gusty; and we are quite sure that Bow bells are out of the question. There is not a boy in all Rutstead parish who would not fight upon this question, and the old people have a horror of metropolitan habits, which no man out of Rutstead could rightly understand. We have a figurative expression that the Londoners live by cutting one another's throats, which principally refers to their commercial rivalries; but Miss Bunbury, for one, does literally believe it. At the Guy Earl of Warwick, which we call familiarly the Guy, you may generally hear some one in the parlour discoursing of our intercourse with the metropolis in pre-railwayite days, when as many as

thirty coaches, besides vehicles of other kinds, used to pass our doors within the twenty-four hours, startling the inhabitants with noisy horns, or the cheers of schoolboys going home. But they have dwindled down into a single carrier's cart—a creaking, dawdling, bony-horsed thing, which rings a cracked bell as it passes through the place, evidently on its last wheels. Our last stage coach only ceased running a few winters ago. It was a remarkably comfortable conveyance, when it did not turn over upon the brink of the chalk-pits (which the parish, by large majorities, declines to rail in); and if the railway had come near us, instead of stealing all our traffic, and leaving us at last in the lurch, it would have had no chance against it. I am quite sure of that; and why? Because we all knew the coachman, and would never have dreamed of withdrawing our support (we never regard any of our dealings but in the light of a support to somebody or something), while the man was civil; and he was invariably civil; and, moreover, had a large family. He was a thin man, with a wrinkled face, and short, grey hair, who did duty sometimes as a post-boy, in a blue jacket and white cords, and drove people at weddings; but was as unlike my idea of a jolly old coachman as any one I ever saw; though he was not out of keeping with the faded and contracted aspect of coaching in those latter days. He was related to two well-known jockeys, and would have gone into that line himself if he had been a trifle lighter, or had been capable of any reduction in flesh by the usual process of sweating down.

But he was a real coachman, full of the traditions of the road, and as ignorant of what time of day you might mean by eight forty-five, as if you had spoken of a decimal fraction. His time for starting was a quarter before nine; but if any passenger happened to be shaving at that moment, what gentleman could reasonably refuse to wait about a little? John Jarvis was his name upon that road which knoweth him no more; for he is dead, and Mrs. Jarvis has got into an almshouse; and the large family have gone out to service; and even the coach, after a struggle with the heavy roads and high prices of one winter, now lies abandoned in a wheelwright's yard, cracked, paintless, broken-windowed, and with a rich crop of moss and houseleek upon its mouldering roof.

When the railway proposed to come near, we passed resolutions at the Guy, and instructed a lawyer to oppose. The coaching interest, which comprised one-half of the inhabitants, said, of course, that there was abundant accommodation already; and the rector said that the railway would bring down all the loose characters in London on Sundays, and take all the respectable people in the village up to town: and Mr. Grinstone, the great landed proprietor, declared that scarcely any sum of money could compensate him for the injury and annoyance he would have to suffer if the hateful scheme were carried out. We raised such a cry, that I verily believe our village was the cause of the railway engineer suddenly striking out a new course through the marshes, on the other side of a ridge of hills. Nobody repents

of that opposition, except Mr. Grinstone, who is now known to have been all along willing to capitulate on advantageous terms. But the country itself is staunch and true. Gentlemen in the House of Commons, in whom we were once proud to recognise an exalted embodiment of our opinions, have deserted our cause again and again; but we are unchanged. What those opinions are, no man who is skilled in the interpretation of hints and signs could fail to know, after remaining an hour among us. Ask old Nelby, the job-master, and proprietor of the solitary fly that stands for hire in these parts, and who has the gouty and lame completely at his mercy. He is not saucy (nobody in our village is), but he knows what is usual, and consequently what is right. Four shillings has been the fare from the corner of Guttlebury Lane to the Black Lion in Swillstead, ever since he can remember; and he has repeatedly said, in the parlour of the Guy, and in the presence of a strongly sympathising audience, that he would not take his own father for a sixpence less. No more he would; for I have seen him, even when driving back empty, and without the hope of another offer, refuse to take up a dusty Londoner, who ignorantly tendered him three-and-six as an ultimatum. A chit! chit! to his highly respectable old gray horse was the only answer which he deigned to make to that ill-advised proposal.

If this does not give you an idea of our opinions, you can ask Chaffers, who had the folly and impudence to come over from Buffborough (a good three miles), on purpose to set up a branch grocery-store in our village,

where he was neither born nor reared, and had no influence nor connections whatever. He tried to wean us from dealing with Pidden (as kind-hearted a creature as ever breathed, and worth money), by writing up Town Prices in his window, and putting up a sun-blind, and having the footway in front of his door watered every day. He had the meanness to offer to undersell Pidden in everything. He put in his window pinker ham than Pidden's—having found out that ham was Pidden's weak point—and showed loaf-sugar at sixpence, of a dazzling purity. He offered new-laid eggs at a shilling a-dozen (Pidden, who keeps fowls, has let many a dozen get musty, rather than do it); and pretended to grind his coffee fresh every day, because he had heard that Pidden, who knew there was a time for all things, always ground his for the week, on Monday mornings. He tried to outdo poor Pidden in everything, and has had as many as four candles all burning at once in his shop. But a universal sympathy grew up for Pidden. We could not tamely see him crushed by a stranger, who had no business there. It was cruel, scandalous; it was mean, despicable, untradesmanlike; it was anything and everything but staunch and true. We found out Chaffers' paltry little handbills stuck up on the sides of barns, and on fences and posts all along the highway, and we daubed them out, or wrote offensive remarks beneath them. We taunted him with wanting to take the bread out of Pidden's mouth, and would be glad to know (and we felt it to be our business to inquire, and Chaffers' to explain,) how Pidden was to keep his

two unmarried daughters in respectability, and pay rent and taxes upon town prices? Chaffers only came over from Buffborough three times a week; some said he was ashamed to show his face there. People made observations upon his personal defects, and said that he looked a sneak, and that you could generally tell. We found out that his wife had an income of her own (Pidden's late wife had not a farthing, and cost him a fortune in doctors); so we said it was plain that he did not do it from necessity, but evidently from downright greediness. I am sure we were much more concerned about it than Pidden himself, who disdained to employ the arts of his opponent, but left himself confidently in the hands of his neighbours and customers; and no wonder; for he flourished under it amazingly. Everyone grew extravagant in grocery, to give Pidden a turn. Even old Miss Bunbury, who had learnt frugality in the days of the East India Company and convoys, would shake a third spoonful into the tea-pot, with a remark that trade would be the better for it, meaning, of course, Pidden's trade. Chaffers' representative was a silly-looking, florid young man, who wetted his red hair, and brushed it all off his forehead. Our boys used to look through the window, and make faces at him, and he always laughed, in a weak, sheepish manner, which showed that he was ashamed of his position there. We did not dislike the young man at all; but when we heard he was miserably underpaid we pitied him, and learned to distinguish between him and Chaffers. He told us frankly that he did not like the place, and

Chaffers was no better than a negro-driver; though he was always so afraid that the tyrant would drop in upon him from Buffborough, that it was quite painful to talk to him. But it did not last long. One day, Chaffers suddenly discharged the florid young man; and Pidden, with a calm dignity, unalloyed with the smallest atom of vindictiveness, saw, from his shop-window, all the unsold stock go back to Buffborough, in a van.

After this, I need scarcely say that we have the strongest dislike to meanness or shabby dealings of any kind. Nobody likes Spokes, the wheelwright, for example, who employs a number of boys, while men with families continually ask him for employment; and who is always taking in people who never served their time to the trade. And what do you suppose we thought of Mr. Simmer, the new curate, who actually (it was when the bread was so dear) told John Hitchman, a poor labouring man, down the lane, with nine children, to let his wife know that stinging nettles boiled down with a little dripping, made a very wholesome and palatable dish? John Hitchman told them all about it at the beer-shop, and it came to the ears of everybody, and we said it was infamous. It was telling a Christian man, who had brought up nine children for his country's benefit, to betake himself to the food of brutes. Nay, the very donkeys on the common shrank from contact with the odious weed which a Christian minister had not hesitated to recommend as a fit nourishment for the bodies of his poor parishioners. Was the fleshy tenement of an immortal spirit to be kept up upon

stinging nettles? We asked how the Reverend Mr. Simmer would like to have his tongue, and palate, and throat irritated to inflammation by stinging nettles? and did not care a pin for his answer, that he had tried and found them very good. We know how grandees, like the Reverend Mr. Simmer, having made an appointment to taste the workhouse soup, always find it excellent, and talk lightly of the labours of bricklaying, after setting first stones with a silver trowel. We made observations on his conduct in a loud voice when he happened to be near. We stared so hard at him, when he accidentally alluded to Nebuchadnezzar in his sermon, that he drew out his delicate white cambric handkerchief, and made such a long pause, that everybody thought the sermon was done. John Hitchman happened to be there that day (he attended church regularly during the excitement), sitting in one of the free seats, wiping his forehead with a tattered, blue, cotton rag; and everybody was struck with the contrast, and made his own reflections. Public opinion chalked itself upon the walls of Mr. Simmer's house; till one day the rector told him, that without any reference whatever to the merits of the case, it was unfortunately evident that he was not popular in the parish, and that he must, therefore, see the necessity of resigning. So he went away; and his true character came out afterwards, when he published a book on population, which competent judges residing in the parish have pronounced to be a disgrace to him as a minister and a man.

Spry, the policeman, who lives upstairs, at the shoe-

maker's, is equally the object of our contempt and detestation. It is nothing to us that the mere presence of Spry makes our property as safe as if it were under guard in the Tower of London. We will grant you that, under the protection of old Cumpton, the late constable of the parish, the very doors of our houses, and the gates of our gardens, have been unhinged and carried away for fire-wood; and nobody dared to go down Guttlebury Lane after dark; for self-interest does not blind us to what is mean and unmanly. We all hate Spry, and never miss an opportunity of reviling him as a pitiful fellow, and a sneak. He never looks you in the face, like an honest man; and has a nasty, shuffling, sidelong walk, which particularly annoys Miss Bunbury, who always speaks of him as that reptile Spry, and who, though she did reluctantly call him in one night, turned him out again the moment she had discovered that there were no thieves in her back kitchen, but only a stray bantam from the next garden. We have seen him in plain clothes peeping through the crevice of the tap-room door of the Guy; and have watched him standing in the sun, with his back to a wall, lazily cutting a whistle out of a bit of reed, and everybody knew that the artful fellow had some business in hand. We have come upon him in out-of-the-way places, and have suddenly found him walking beside us, in a manner that makes your blood run cold. There is not a boy in our part that would associate with Spry; but he does not care for that. Since he managed to get noted for promotion as an active and intelligent officer, he

calls us all civilians, and seems to enjoy his own isolation.

But we have another quarrel with Spry, which I will just mention, in further illustration of our opinions. Spry was originally no more a policeman than you are. He is by trade (as we always express it) a cooper. His father was a cooper; his grandfather was a cooper; and the Sprys have all been coopers (except one, who went to sea), ever since they came into the village. But this Spry actually deserted the calling of his ancestors, and, on the shabby excuse that coopering wasn't what it used to be, entered the police force, and lost caste among us for ever. Now, if Spry's father had been a policeman—if he had been the son of Cumpton, the late constable, who died childless, at an advanced age—or if he could have shown the slightest relationship with any person whose business it had been to prowl about, and take his neighbours into custody, we might have endured it, and come to look upon him as a necessary institution in a corrupt state of society. But Spry had no such excuse, or did not care to mention it, if he had. He does not care a fig for the example of the coaching interest, who are true to their calling, to a boy. They hang about the steps of the Guy, and loiter round its moss-grown, broken-windowed outbuildings, still clinging with a fanatical faith to the hope of the final disappearance of railways, and triumphant restoration of four-in-hands. Their linen jackets are in tatters, and their shoes are soleless; but there they lie, on sunny days, basking under the red-brick

wall, or fast asleep in shady corners. But see them if a cart or chaise should stop there! Only a fortnight ago, there drove up to that door a dusty, four-wheeled vehicle, containing one lean gentleman, who, to the wonderment of all, desired to stay there for the night. Then the coaching people sprang upon their feet, and came about him; and four of them unharnessed his rough, shaggy pony, and led him tenderly in; and two held the traveller's carpet-bag, and one his whip; while the traveller himself went in, and was swallowed up in the gloomy vastness of that ancient hostelry. He must have been a strange man, for he decided to stay there a whole week, giving, by his single presence, an unwonted stimulus to the trade of our village. Great, therefore, was the grief of all when he went away. The coaching interest looked after him till the diminished forms of pony, chaise, and man, disappeared over the hill-top, and the sound of his wheels died away. Will he ever come again? Some think he will; but others shake their heads, and say it may be many a day first. But they will wait patiently, and so will the Guy. Its bar has contracted, and its whole life shrunk into one dismal corner of the building. But its fifteen beds are still made up, and, we are proud to say, that its extensive accommodation for man and beast has never been reduced.

I do not know whether it be a natural consequence of our steady adherence to those principles, which I have faintly indicated; but it appears to me that all the inhabitants of Rutstead either make money and

die well off, or else live in great poverty and dependence, till, after going into the union and coming out again, and hovering about that splendid building, like dazzled moths, they are finally drawn into it, and slowly consumed. Our chemist, who sells human-medicine and horse-medicine, besides tobacco, pepper, and other articles of domestic use, is publicly known to have made money in that dusty and deserted shop of his. He is not an active man; he spends more time in examining pimples on his face, than in anything else; and he has a wife who gets dirty dog's-eared Minerva Press novels from a sweet-stuff shop across the road, and reads them again and again; and, addressing the unknown author of 'A Year and a Day,' in four volumes, writes in pencil, at the foot of his most eloquent chapters, "Oh, why wert thou not a poet!" She is no help to him in the business, and he mildly observes that some people like a shop, while others never take to it! How he made money with such notions, I know not, but everybody knows he has. So has Grimshaw, the butcher, though I never saw four joints hanging up at once in his clean-swept shop, which, with the tree before the door, and its footway paved with pebbles, is as pretty a place as you will find in our neighbourhood. He never ventures to expel the vital spark—which he professionally regards as a something which keeps sweet the flesh of sheep or beeves—until he has gone round on horseback to all his customers, and satisfied himself that their united orders amount to a whole animal. Again, there is Groyn, the builder, who owns half the houses within

five miles round, and who is a staunch upholder of our principles—as sturdy a defender of his right to build for every one within that distance as the heart of our village could desire. He smokes, and plays at bowls and skittles, at the Guy, and boasts in his cups that he can buy and sell Grinstone, the landed proprietor, and shouts it out loud enough to be heard by Grinstone, in his pillared mansion over the way; and I have no doubt he could, though he never cared a pin for poor Richard's maxims, and, as far as I can see, ought to have been bankrupt long ago. He is a notorious gormandiser, though only for the public benefit. Live and let live, he says, is his notion; and, when he is stuffing more than usual, he will keep repeating that noble maxim, and will give it you on every occasion with such an air of being then struck with the idea for the first time in his life, that if any one at the same table hurled one of the dishes at his head in a moment of rage, I could understand it. There is such a disagreeable self-possession about him, when he is not eating—such an embarrassing air of knowing what you are going to say, and smiling deprecatingly before you say it, that I abhor him from my soul. Why should that man flourish, and have the gout for weeks together, when Spokes, the wheelwright, works early and late, and cannot make both ends meet; and poor, old Mrs. Weeks has forty-three direct descendants, all living, who could not, altogether, prevent her selling her old walnut chest of drawers, and antique piece of needlework, and going into the union at eighty-five?

But if I were in the mood for asking peevish questions about what I see and know in our village, this paper would never come to an end. I might desire to know why beggars enjoy so sacred a character among us, and know it so well, that we dare not say our gardens are our own. They open our gates, and come round and bully us at our back doors, and even quote Scripture at us until we tremble in our shoes. Why does a tyrannical public opinion compel us to bear this meekly, and forbid us to send them up the lane to Mr. Colewort, the market gardener, who is generally in want of hands. I might ask why we have four chapels and a Mormonite cobbler's, where the elect meet nightly, and whence, in long processions, singing merry hymns to vulgar tunes, they go forth to publicly baptize grown men and women in a horse-pond by the roadside, and not a solitary school within two miles. And if I did not know this last fact to be true, I might ask why we are so prejudiced and ignorant—so proud of being out of the sound of Bow bells, and so united to resist all projects of improvement—why, within twelve miles from the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, London, we nail horseshoes over doors, and have a public excitement about a ghost now and then—or why poor widowed Mrs. Cottle, when the Mormon elders met together and formally cursed her for some trifling disobedience, went melancholy, and tried to hang herself, and failed at first; until, after moping about for months, she hung herself effectually; whereon, the wrathful elders met again, and were much edified, but unappeased.

THE PORTRAIT OF A SPY.

Englishmen who hear of treasons and conspiracies abroad; of societies of the Marianne and societies of the tenth of December; of midnight visits from gendarmes or Italian sbirri; of sudden discoveries of muskets or grenades in mouldy cellars or poverty stricken garrets; of police spies, in white neckcloths and glazed boots, mingling in private soirées, and looking stray nods or shrugs, or half-heard whispers; of warrants, of banishment from the préfet under *lois de suspects*, of secret denunciations and mysterious disappearances of incautious talkers—even Englishmen who have lived amid these things, and got away (as wise men do) as soon as they can, would have some difficulty in imagining the enactment of such scenes at home. Something like them, however, has been seen, even in England, before now—times of plots and conspiracies, and distrust, when no man's life or property was safe. It is not without its uses, at this time, to go back and regard some of the features of such periods in the under-currents of their history. All readers of English history know the stories of Oates, and Bedloe, and Dangerfield; and all know that one of the most terri-

ble symptoms of the civil troubles in which they flourished is the prevalence of false witnesses, who, to shelter themselves, or for the gratification of old hatreds, or more commonly for the sake of gain, or of favour with those in power, forge evidence against the lives and liberties of others. One of the latter class—one of an infamous school—Mr. William Fuller, may be taken as a fair example. His adventures are briefly touched on by Lord Macaulay in his 'History of England,' who describes him as having done all that man could do to secure an eminent place among villains. "That Fuller's plot is less celebrated than the Popish plot," he says, "is rather the fault of historians than of Fuller." But though now forgotten, he must once have secured a considerable amount of public interest, if I may judge from the bundle of pamphlets concerning him which I have lately stumbled upon in an old library. I find many lives of him. Here is 'The whole Life of Mr. William Fuller, being an Impartial Account of His Birth, Education, Relations, &c., Together with a true Discovery of the Intrigues for which he now lies confined; with his hearty Repentance for the Misdemeanours he did in the late Reign, Impartially writ by Himself, 1703;' and to this is prefixed an engraved portrait of William Fuller, Gent. (the engraver has left out the e in gent, but being afterwards better informed, has conscientiously inserted it with a caret). And truly he does appear here an honest, simple, country gentleman, of a very open and pleasant countenance. Then, I have the 'Life and Unaccountable Actions of William Fuller,

alias Esq. Fuller, alias Colonel, &c.; the notorious Cheat, &c. The Second Edition, with large Additions;' also the 'Life of William Fuller, alias Fullee, alias Fowler, alias Ellison, &c.; by original, a Butcher's son; by education a Coney-woolcutter; by inclination an Evidence; by vote of Parliament an Impostor; by Title of his own making a Colonel, and by his own Demerits, now a close Prisoner in the Fleet, 1702.' I have a number of other pamphlets; from all of which, giving him the benefit of his own explanations as far as they go, I will endeavour to sketch his story.

Fuller was born at Milton next Sittingbourne, in Kent, in sixteen hundred and seventy. His father, he says, was a grazier, and supplied the fleets and navies during the Dutch wars with cattle; but the hostile biographers say a butcher, and declare that he could only have fed the fleets and navies by a miracle. His mother, he also informs us, was the daughter of Charles Herbert, cousin-german to the Marquis of Powis, who married his father without the knowledge of any of her relations and friends; and although this, too, is denied, it appears from circumstances to be probable. His parents died when he was young, but they had placed him at a good school at Maidstone, where, says Fuller, whose humility and repentance had not by any means lowered his self-esteem, "I scorned common sports, and had always an aspiring mind." His guardian, Mr. Cornelius Harfleet, however, does not appear to have observed any of these indications of future greatness; for he apprenticed him to Mr. James Hartley, a skinner,

in Shoe Lane, London; but Fuller felt that he could not "be company for a parcel of silly, unpolished fellows and wenches, pulling and cutting of beaver and coney-skins." He fretted in his new employment; and meeting one day with a relation of his mother's, Sir John Burrows, a Roman Catholic, he was introduced by him to Lord Powis, and taken into that nobleman's family, and afterwards became page to Lady Melford, the wife of another Catholic nobleman at the court of James. Here, Fuller saw much of court-life, and when the Revolution came, fled to France with his master.

The queen had already taken refuge at St. Germains, but the king still lingered in England; and one day Fuller was despatched with letters from the queen to her husband. "Though I was young," says Fuller, "being born in Kent, I had a perfect knowledge of those roads, and having been used to travel, the queen adjudged me a proper person." The account of this part of his life is necessarily drawn from his own narrative; but it is probably substantially correct; for it is impossible to account for some portions of his known career, without assuming his intimate acquaintance with the Courts of Saint James and Saint Germains. Fuller discharged his commission to the satisfaction of his employers, and was thenceforth frequently sent upon such perilous errands. Letters to various persons in England were elaborately sewn into the buttons of his coat, and Fuller undertook, at imminent risk of the hangman, to deliver them. Sometimes he came boldly up the river, and went ashore near the Tower, and set

about his business unobserved; or, a French sloop landed him at night on the beach between Deal and Dover; but at other times the smugglers were his friends. At that time our forefathers, in their wisdom, had forbidden the export of wool from this kingdom, and the consequence was a large smuggling trade in that article upon all the southern coast. The men engaged in this Owling trade, as he calls it, frequently conveyed Fuller over, and landed him in the marshes near Lydd, whence he got to London as well as he could. Once after landing, he groped his way over the slippery shingles—the smugglers having given him good-night, and put out to sea again—and climbed up the sea-bank of the great Romney Marsh. A heavy wind was blowing, which threatened to carry him over into the salt ditches on the other side, and the place was very dreary, no habitation being near save the lighthouse at a distance; and to this Fuller got with much difficulty, the night being extremely dark. Two old men occupied the lighthouse, who must have been astonished to find a stranger in that dismal spot on such a night. They entertained him with the best fare they had, and a dirty bed; but Fuller was wet, and wearied, and could almost have slept out upon the bleak marsh. He told them, for his invention rarely failed him, that he had been aboard an English ship bound westward, but that, having received letters from London in the Downs, he had come ashore there; that the sea running very high, they had found no calm place, save at the point where the ship's boat had

landed him; and that he had relations near Tenterden. The story was believed, and the following morning early, Fuller got to the next farm-house, and took horse, and rode away through the Weald of Kent and Tunbridge to London.

This kind of business grew more and more dangerous. Invasions were expected. Conspiracies were abroad, and traitors, if discovered, found little mercy. Fuller's connection with Saint Germains had become known to King William's Government, and a warrant was out against him for high treason; but though the authorities had his name correctly, yet the description of his person was not accurate, for they had taken him by his name to be a brother of one Mr. Fuller that served the Queen Dowager; who, instead of being an active stripling, was a man well in years, lusty, and tall. Notwithstanding the warrant, Fuller, being young, and having a simple, honest-looking face, even obtained admission to prisoners in the Tower, with whom he had instructions to communicate; but he was obliged to find new means of returning to France, and so bought a suit of sea-clothes, besmeared his hands and face with pitch, tar, and dirt, and took passage aboard a fishing-vessel. Fuller, however, made several more journeys, with new frights and narrow escapes. Once, he daringly took a lodging in Westminster, near Mr. Rowland Tempest, the late king's private secretary, who had then lately come from Ireland, with treasonous letters. "The messengers," says Fuller, "were all the time searching for us. So we kept close, and when we

had occasion to speak to each other in the night, without our shoes we tramped over the houses, and consulted how we should get off, behind a large stack of chimneys." Subsequently, Fuller went to Ireland, to Lord Powis at the camp of King James; and came next by an Irish smack to Bristol on further treasonable business. Here his adventures had nearly come to an end; for the authorities captured him, and took him before a justice of the peace, who ordered him to be searched; but his papers were well concealed, made up in the moulds of his buttons, and so covered over with silk or silver, while some letters were sown up in his boots within the linings; and Fuller made so plausible a story, that the simple justice discharged him.

At length, however, Fuller's treasonable tours were brought to an end. For the twelfth time, according to his account, he set out for England, with many letters concealed in buttons, keys, and all manner of ways that could be contrived. Having arrived in England, and delivered some of his commissions to some persons who met him by appointment at the Half Moon Tavern in Cheapside, Fuller was leaving the tavern, about nine in the evening, when he met, upon the threshhold, his old guardian, Mr. Harfleet, with his nephew, a Major Kitchell. These gentlemen were zealous for the cause of King William, and, recognising him by the light of their footman's flambeau, they compelled him to accompany them in a coach to Lord Shrewsbury's house in St. James's Square, where he was threatened with Newgate, irons, and the Tower.

Fuller was not proof against these threats, although his papers defied the searchers. He was confined for some weeks, during which he turned Protestant, was taken to the king, and betrayed his employers. That he was after this time used by the Government is admitted by his enemies. He was commanded to keep secret his arrest, to make some excuses for his delay, and return to France, which he did, bringing back other papers, which were regularly copied by the Government, and then delivered; an act of treachery which he repeated several times, until at length his fear of returning to France was greater than his old dread on English ground. He resolved on one open act of treachery, which must bring his journeys to an end. Being employed on a mission from St. Germains, in concert with one Mathew Crone, an Irish priest, he resolved to betray his companion. Crone was seized, as he supposed, with Fuller; but, being under examination at Lord Shrewsbury's office, where he denied all, Crone, by chance, the office door being open, observed Fuller pass with his sword on and without any keepers; which so struck him, says Fuller, that he was hardly able to speak. Fuller became evidence against him on the trial, and he was condemned to death.

The business of a spy seems at that time to have been an attractive one. The uncle and Major Kitchell having betrayed Fuller, immediately laid with him a scheme for the ruin of Colonel Crayford, Governor of Sheerness. Major Kitchell, says Fuller, living at Milton, had, I suppose, a design to get Mr. Crayford's

place; and it is pretty evident, from Fuller's own account, that this was the truth. The plan was cunningly devised. A letter was forged from Colonel Crayford to the queen at St. Germains, calculated to draw from her such a letter as suited their designs. Fuller delivered the forged letter, and brought from the queen an answer considered likely to try the loyalty of Crayford, or to compromise him in some way. Crayford, however, by his honesty, foiled their plans. "When I carried him the letter," Fuller says, "he received me civilly; but started when I named a letter from the queen in France. He took it, but told me he must confine me as a prisoner, until he had sent it to the Secretary of State. Then I showed him a warrant from my Lord Shrewsbury, requiring all officers, military and civil, to permit me to pass in any part of this kingdom without control; and I was not to be confined on any account whatever, without first giving notice to the Privy Council. I made a true report of my reception when I came to the king, my business having made a great noise in the world, and abundance of persons being put into the Tower, and all other prisons in England."

Thus did Mr. Fuller continue to testify his loyalty to King William; but the best of men in public life make enemies. Having to give evidence against a friend whom he had betrayed, he suddenly fell ill before the trial. Dr. Lower, he says, and others, gave their opinion that he was poisoned, and he lay seven weeks without moving hand or foot. His hair came off, and

his nails also changed their colour. And after all, Mr. Thomas White confessed that he, for a large bribe, gave him the dose in a dish of Scotch porridge, to prevent his giving evidence. Mr. Fuller complains bitterly of other underhand tricks devised to prevent his old friend from being hanged. One of the jurymen had the amazing wickedness to object to Fuller as a witness, on the ground that no man being in a plot should be an evidence against any other of the conspirators; and this pretence he maintained in defiance of Chief Justice Holt and other judges, who rebuked him. This fellow held out for forty-eight hours; and two or three of his brother jurymen, being ancient, subsequently died of the effects of their fast—though he himself, as he afterwards admitted, was provided with a store of sweetmeats, one Madam Clifford being actually taken in the act of flinging him papers of good things in at the court-house window.

Mr. Fuller, the evidence, as he was called, being very busy in this way, now began to flourish amazingly. He had a handsome allowance from the Government, and being a good-looking fellow, as his portrait testifies, he started as a man of fashion. He set up his coach, and had servants clothed in rich liveries: he lodged in Pall Mall, going to court every day. "I lived," says he, "in hopes of mighty things, and spent the devil and all in following the court—followed all fashions, and, like others, run into tradesmen's debts. Every birthday or ball night I had all new. I was a good benefactor to the playhouse, and never missed an opportunity of being

amongst the ladies." When the king went to Ireland, Mr. Fuller followed thither with a handsome equipage, consisting of several servants, horses, and the like, and was every way richly accoutred. His purpose was to obtain a captain's commission; but though he did not succeed in this, his journey appears to have paid its expenses, for he made a good deal of money by persuading unfortunate prisoners of his power and influence, and promising for a consideration in ready money to obtain their freedom. By such means, and by a skilful knack of borrowing money of strangers upon false pretences, Mr. Fuller's journey became a profitable one, but he spent all his gains in riotous living. When the king went to Holland, Fuller followed him again. "I made me twelve suits of clothes," he says, "and my waistcoats were the worst of them of silver stuff of about forty shillings the yard, so that at the Hague I made no small figure."

All this was a much finer thing than cutting coney-skins at Mr. Hartley's dingy warehouse in Shoe Lane: but there came a change. Mr. Fuller's affairs were embarrassed. One day, as he was going to Court through Pall Mall, eight bailiffs stopped his chairman, and arrested him. It was not customary then, as it is now, to yield as a matter of course to the officers of the law; "but," says Fuller, "I had but two footmen there, and the bailiffs being so many in number, I was carried to a spunging-house." Finally, he removed to the King's Bench prison; but by giving security to the Marshal, with twenty guineas, he obtained his release,

and took lodgings in Axe Yard, within the liberty of the Court.

This was a dismal change indeed. Spying and informing had had their day. Imitators had sprung up on all sides, and the trade had gone to wrack and ruin: but Fuller did not despair. Single traitors were no longer worth a guinea. A plot—a good plot, involving the lives and fortunes of a hundred or so of unsuspecting English gentlemen—was the thing to revive the business. Fuller determined to discover one; and took some pains to settle what sort of a plot was likely to suit the public taste. Indeed, it is pretty evident, from his own story, that he removed to Axe Yard for no other purpose than to take lessons in this new branch of his profession from the infamous Doctor Titus Oates, who had himself become too well known some years before, to enable him to practise in person.

Fuller's account of his connection with Oates affords a curious picture of the times. "Whilst I lodged in Axe Yard," says he, "I became acquainted with Doctor Oates, who had seen me before, as I had him, puffing about the court; but now, being neighbours, we began to grow very intimate. He invites me to his house to dinner, and there I met with Mister John Tutchin, and a great many that talked mightily against King James [this was the safest sort of talk at that time], and the best name they could afford that prince was rogue and scoundrel-rascal. I never heard such invectives uttered before, as by these men. They began to tell me I must be hearty in my cause; it was a glorious thing to dis-

cover a plot, and he that would serve a nation must fear nobody, but strike at all that stood in his way. They preached up liberty and property, and spoke very despicably of all kings, not sparing him on the throne. They said he employed rogues [how could Mr. Fuller deny it?] and Tories, men that would betray and ruin the Protestant religion, the king himself, and the civil rights of the people [was Mr. Fuller likely to hesitate after that?]. They exclaimed mightily against the noble family of the Finches, and by their malice, said a thousand horrid things against the greatest of that name, and told me it was impossible that any of that family should love me, and it was a pity I did not know something against them, so as to bring them so into the plot as to have them cut off root and branch. These things startled me at first; but some considerable men, as John Arnold, Esquire, John Saville, Esquire, and others it is not fitting to name, appearing amongst them, and saying the same things, telling long stories of what they had done to serve and save the nation, what they had suffered for the same, and what danger England was yet in—these things made me look on them as saints and mighty patrons for the public good. In a short time the reverend doctor invites me to come and lodge in his house, and having his first floor very handsomely furnished, I accepted his offer, and had room for my servants also."

Thus, according to Mr. Fuller, did the wicked Doctor and his party corrupt him. But their villany went further still. When he was in Oates's house, Fuller

says, "he and his friend Tutchin, whom he almost kept, with the rest of the gang, prevailed with me to let them see a copy of my information of the whole plot, and when they read it they shook their heads, blessing themselves, and said what a pity it was that so good a plot should be mangled, and spoiled, and no better used. 'Gadzooks!' says the Doctor, 'I wouldn't be served so. You are a fool, Fuller, and a coxcomb. God's life! I could beat you for having no more wit. Why, I would go to Charles and tell him his own, nay, swear he was in the Popish plot himself, only he knew not that part designed against his own life. I made him afraid of me, and his lords, Lowtherdale and the rest. I called them rogues to their faces, but you are afraid to speak to them.' At this kind of rate I was baited by him and his crew, until to avoid them I returned to my former lodging over against him, for I could not bear his continual foul language." Another reason, however, for avoiding Doctor Oates, which Fuller calls a good pretence, peeps out in his narrative. "Mr. Aaron Smith," he says, "seeing the Doctor and me together one day, at a tavern in the city, he fell a swearing at me for being with the Doctor in public. 'Look you, Mr. Fuller,' said he, 'the Doctor is a good and an honest man. He saved his country, and deserves well from all good men; but there be many at Court who hate him, and so they will you, if you keep him company. Besides, the Jacobites will say he tutors you; and if Mister Crone should confess, he would be set up as a witness against a great many great men, and

this being with Doctor Oates will bring such reflections upon you that the Tories will take advantage by it. So you must leave off being seen publicly in his company, or I shall complain of you, to your damage.' I was not sorry for all this," says Fuller, "and though I left the Doctor's house, yet he would visit me frequently, as did his retainers."

Fuller's plot was as yet but a cock-and-bull story, and he pretended that he required time and money to bring the whole matter to light. In such times, however, parties cannot afford to neglect a warning, however doubtful, and he appears to have persuaded many of the truth—among others the Archbishop of Canterbury, who promised to forward the matter with the king and queen. Fuller got an order for money out of the treasury; nor was this all; the marshal, hearing that he was about to start for Flanders, where the king was, captured him again, and kept him close in the prison. Upon this he says, "I sent to my good Lord of Canterbury presently, and he the same night acquainted the queen. So the next morning early, Mr. Dalone, the queen's secretary's servant, came to my chamber-door, and entering, brought me a present of two hundred pounds in silver, which was very welcome." With this, and the help of innumerable swindling tricks, Fuller travelled to the camp in the Low Countries, in his old state of a coach and six. His confidence and effrontery were unbounded. Meeting with the notorious Colonel Kirk, who was with the army, he boldly asserted to him that he was a relation of Lord Sydney,

who was actually then in the camp. This Fuller confesses. The hostile biographers tell us that Lord Sydney, hearing the story, and being shown the person, asked him what country he was of, and which way his relation to my lord came in? Fuller, in no wise abashed, replied that "truly he had the happiness to be somewhat related, though not so near as a nephew 'twas true, as he much feared it was his misfortune to be at present unknown to his lordship; however, he hoped his lordship would pardon his boldness in laying claim to so high an honour, it being impossible for him to do less than pride himself, though in the most distant affinity, to a family of that worth and glory as his lordship's." "His lordship," says the biographer, was not altogether satisfied with this answer; but "was pleased to signify that he desired him to forbear laying further claim to his kindred; for if he did not, he would have a paper pinned to his back, and have him thrashed by his footmen through the camp, that it might be known how little affection or respect he had for his own nephew." This seems to have alarmed Fuller, who at the next town abandoned his story, though afterwards he says: "I must own that I passed for a nephew of the Archbishop of Canterbury." The king appears to have been too busy to examine his story. He commanded him to go to Brussels, and wait for further instructions; and, finally, he returned to London without obtaining a hearing.

Time was precious, and plots will not keep. On the tenth of November, sixteen hundred and ninety-one,

Fuller, finding the Government slow to believe, boldly petitioned the House of Commons to be heard. He undertook to produce five hundred original letters and papers on behalf of King James, and to support them by four witnesses, each men of property, of five hundred pounds per annum. Names were mentioned, and many trembled at the threatened disclosures; but Fuller had no letters or papers. His object was to obtain money as long as he could delay exposure. When ordered to appear before the House, he pretended to have been poisoned; but a committee being appointed to visit him, he declared that one Mr. Thomas Jones was the real discoverer of the business; but neither Jones nor any other parties named could be found. After much shuffling of this kind, Fuller was indicted for libel, and condemned to stand twice in the pillory, and pay a fine of two hundred marks to the king, or go to prison. These punishments, however, did not cure him. In a short time he obtained his release, and set up again in his old business with as great success as ever. At one time he had a groom, three horses, and a footman, and lodged on Ludgate Hill. Some noted Whig gentlemen employed him with Doctor Kingston, who, now and then reporting that he knew where a traitor was to be found, received orders to track him out at once in company with Fuller. This, with every variety of swindling, served to repair Fuller's broken fortunes; he kept an establishment at Twickenham; and making the acquaintance of a lady of property, inveigled her into promising to marry him. Fuller calls her a young

lady with twenty thousand pounds, but Narcissus Luttrell, in his Diary, under date of August, sixteen hundred and ninety-six, records the fact of her being a widow with fifteen thousand pounds. They were solemnly contracted, and were to be married, when a troublesome brother went to Tunbridge Wells; but the lady suddenly fell sick of the smallpox and died. "I was a faithful mourner," Mr. Fuller touchingly observes; "for if I knew my own heart, I valued her person more than her fortune, but both together were too great a blessing for me."

Thus Mr. Fuller, sometimes up, sometimes down, frequently in the Fleet or its liberties, and occasionally in splendid lodgings, contrived to pass a year or two. Through his invisible friend Jones, he was constantly hearing of a traitor, and he was always ready, for any Whig gentlemen who wished it, to prove strange and treasonable practices committed by somebody in the interest of France. When the trade flagged a little, he set up as a literary gentleman—published accounts of various trips to Hampshire and Flanders, in search of traitors. Curious glimpses of his literary associates are obtained in his narratives and prefaces. There was Mr. John Tutchin, already named, the editor of the 'Observator,' who was sentenced (for libels) to be whipped through every town in England. Also Mr. Robert Murray, who lodged within the liberties of the Fleet, at a coffin-maker's in the Old Bailey, where "Jack Tutchin," being out of credit, came to live with him; until Mr. Murray complained urgently of his fellow-

lodger's unfortunate inability to change his linen. Besides these, were Mr. Pettis, a scandalous, drunken fellow, and a number of other bold writers and politicians, including Doctor Kingston, who, said Fuller, when he quarrelled with him, "served his time with one Sprig, a tailor at Northampton, and afterwards sold gingerbread and cardmatches in the old Artillery ground, and jumped into orders by copying an instrument he found in a parson's old breeches that came to him to be mended, and since that was obliged to quit those orders, to which he never was justly entitled."

Fuller proved himself a worthy member of this fraternity, by putting forth a constant succession of libellous pamphlets, which he impudently dedicated to various persons in high position in the state — the principal of them tending to show that the pretender was not the child of King James or the queen, but of an Irish woman, named Mrs. Grey. Fuller pretended that the queen's supposed confinement was a trick, and that the child of Mrs. Grey had been taken from her to support the cheat. He gave the most circumstantial narratives of what he had seen in Saint James's Palace when a page to the Marchioness of Powis, and afterwards in France, where he alleged that the real mother had been murdered. The tracts were read with avidity. They favoured a popular belief, which was not without its use to the Government, and as long as he libelled none but Catholics and Jacobites, they were allowed to circulate. But Fuller was again emboldened by his success. When his readers began to tire, he pretended

that his old informant Jones, who once left him in the lurch so cruelly, had again turned up, and had handed over to him a wonderful collection of treasonable documents. Fuller now began to forge wholesale, and print letters of King James, the queen, Father Corker, Mrs. Grey, the Earl of Tyrconnel, and the Duchess of Powis, with a number of formal depositions of persons of quality and worth. These he declared to be "from the originals, as they were intercepted and delivered to his present Majesty." The letters were formal and circumstantial, and with the depositions and other documents had every appearance of genuineness. They were dedicated to the Earl of Romney, to the Lord Mayor, and to others. Each publication was recommended to the consideration of both Houses of Parliament, and one bore on its titlepage the words "Published by Command." Not content with these startling publications, he once more petitioned both Houses of Parliament to be allowed to substantiate his charges. Fuller, who admits the forgeries, says that he was assured by his party that nothing could hurt him. "I was promised," he says, "by several persons of figure and note that I should have forty witnesses to stand by me, and be brought off with honour." Many persons of high rank were compromised by his statements, and the House of Lords were compelled to order his attendance. Fuller then began the old trick of shuffling. He pretended that Jones would not come, until he had protection from the House. When this was granted, he took the messengers into the country for twelve

days in search of Jones, who never could be found. Sometimes, the Jacobites had threatened to murder Jones if he came to the House; sometimes, Jones was hiding at the house of Mr. Ingelsfield, who was as airy and unsubstantial as Jones; and sometimes both of them had promised to be at the Three Tuns Tavern, at Ludgate Hill, or some other place, and did not come, Jones having taken fright again and vanished. The House at last got tired of this; and in spite of letters to the Chancellor, and the Speaker, and the Chief Justice, solemnly attesting the genuineness of the documents, and promising to produce Jones if they would only grant him time and money, and in spite of actual letters from Jones himself promising to come—Fuller was again indicted, and convicted, still calling on the name of Jones, and offering to produce him within eight hours.

The sentence was, that Fuller should go to all the Courts in Westminster with a paper pinned upon him, expressing his crime; that he should stand three days in the pillory, two hours at a time, at Charing Cross, Temple Bar, and the Royal Exchange; that he should be whipped at Bridewell, kept to hard labour, and fined a thousand marks—all of which was executed, as appears from a lamentable account by Mr. Fuller himself:

"Never," he says, "was man amongst Turks or barbarians known to be worse used. I was sadly abused at Charing Cross; but at Temple Bar I was stifled with all manner of dust, filth, and rotten eggs;

and my left eye was so bruised with a stone flung, that it swelled out of my head immediately, the blow deprived me of my senses, and I fell down (not wilfully, as some say), and hung by the neck. Three times was I served in that kind, losing all manner of sense, though I fell down but twice, and being almost dead, I was by order taken out; but felt not my release, nor was I sensible of anything for some hours after. I was a miserable object to behold, and hardly any that saw me thought it possible for me to survive. I was all over bruised from head to heel, and on the small of my back; as I stood stooping, a stone struck me, which, being taken up, was found to weigh more than six pounds. On Monday in the City I was more tenderly used, after having made my complaint to Sir James Bateman, then sheriff. On Friday, when I was carried to Bridewell, I was very sick and weak; but nothing availed. I must suffer, and had thirty-nine lashes. Being ironed with heavy fetters, I was sent down immediately to hard labour, and not so much as allowed to be dressed; insomuch that when I came from work at night, the blood had dried my shirt and skin together, so that both came off. I had a violent fever, but must to work the next day by six. I was barbarously used by some of the petty officers of the place, and was inhumanly beat and bruised by one of the arts-masters. I am now," Fuller concludes, "a prisoner in the common side of the Queen's Bench; lodged under ground in close, nauseous holes, such as a gentleman would hardly put a dog into that he loved. We have no air,

nor is there anything but misery to be seen. I have been also kept in irons, though now only a prisoner for debt, and all my usage in the execution of my sentence has been barbarous beyond comparison, which makes me, with holy Job, cry out: Pity me; pity me, O ye my friends; for the hand of the Lord is upon me!"

A dismal termination this—a woful change from livery servants, and coach and six, and lodgings in Pall Mall, and waistcoats of stuff worth forty shillings the yard. Nor was there now any hope of recovery. The hundreds whom Fuller had accused, had suffered imprisonment and paid their fines, till governments were tired—and good Queen Anne was on the throne. Informing was out of fashion, and Fuller was at last too much damaged for the business.

"To end my days in solitude," he piously says in a postcript, "and prepare for a blessed eternity, is the utmost extent of my wishes."

But he appears to have got out of prison again. Fifteen years afterwards, we obtain a momentary glimpse of him, getting a living by a petty roguery, which tells how much he had fallen—persuading poor tradesmen of his power to get them small Government appointments, and inducing them by his bold talk to give him sums of money; for which he was committed to Newgate in seventeen hundred and seventeen. After this he drops into an obscurity in which we have failed, in spite of much searching, to track him. It is not difficult to imagine him, after many visits to Newgate and Bridewell, condemned for some petty forgery, and

making his last appearance one morning at Tyburn, or in front of his old friend Jack Tutchin's lodgings—slinking out of the world with an alias which sheltered him from the fierce howlings of the mob, and concealed his fate for ever.

LOITERING BY THE WAY.

I KNOW there are men who boast that they have cured themselves of the habit of loitering at bookstalls. I hope they have exchanged it for no worse habit. I would no more give them credit for their self-conquest than I would join in their foolish boast. I am not a snuff-taker, a slave to opium, a gambler, or a drinker of strong drinks. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge myself to be guilty of all such moral weakness, as may be implied in a love of lingering at bookstalls. Surely, if there be an innocent and unobtrusive pleasure, I may cry "*Eureka*" here. I am not aware of any one ever getting a disease of the brain by indulging in it; or waxing glassy-eyed, or sallow-cheeked, or getting slothful, or cruel. I never heard of any man ruining his family, or blowing out his brains, who had previously written a note, in which he laid the blame of his untimely end upon bookstalls, and charged the young and thoughtless to take warning by his fate in time. I do not remember a case of gout or dyspepsia being attributed to the same cause. Therefore, thou Bacchanalian or Tobacconalian, pick the

mote out of thine own eye, and let me loiter when I will.

Here is the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: he knew the worth of time, if ever any man did; yet he never begrudged ten minutes at a bookstall. The books he speaks of as his earliest favorites are all the very sort you find at bookstalls. That odd volume of the 'Spectator,' for instance, which he says he bought. You do not buy odd volumes of the 'Spectator' at regular booksellers. Across a hundred and odd years of wars and revolutions I see him plainly now—a stout and healthy looking boy in homely dress—eagerly scanning the slender stock of some dealer in odd, tattered volumes, in that clean-kept and shady Quaker city, where he landed penniless. He runs over the authors; thinks, perhaps, that one day the New World will have her great names too, when she has time to blend the beautiful and useful, like the trees and houses in Penn's new capital. He notes 'The Art of Thinking,' by Messieurs du Port Royal, Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' Cotton's 'Montaigne,' 'Plutarch's Lives,' and sighs, feeling some few loose coppers in his pocket. Suddenly his eye catches a little dirty book, denuded of one cover and weather-beaten in a voyage across the sea; a solitary volume, parted from its kin and sold into exile, like a slave by a bad master, never to join company again with its lost brethren, in any book-case in the world. Taking it up, he is straightway introduced to Sir Roger de Coverley, Knight, in whose pleasant company he forgets the passers by,

and the bookdealer inside, who begins to suspect him of a shabby design to read that book through in twelve visits, and is about to point out to him the trifling price, by way of hint, when the youth draws forth his hand, and depositing the coppers, takes the little book away. Stay, loyal and obedient subject of His Majesty King George of England, who shall be great hereafter! Stay! I would look upon your honest face again. Walk not away so fast. I have wondrous things to tell —secrets of which you or your fellow countrymen, who number yet not quite a million, do not dream. I could tell you all about the tea that shall be wasted in the waters of Boston Harbour, and what will come of it. Startling news I have of things that shall be seen in France one day; whereof even now the seeds are sown. But he does not look back, nor to right or left, till he is at home, where for many a day he will pore over that little book, learning whole essays by heart, and versifying 'Vizions of Mirza,' with a delight which only bookstall books can give.

I have no sympathy with grubbers after very old books. Black-letter has no charm for me, and superfluous final e's are an eyesore. It rejoices not me to see that my book was printed "at the sign of the Black Boy, over against St. Bede's." I have no pleasure in that mass of prefaces, addresses to the reader, prologues, exordia, marginal notes, epilogues, and envoys, in which our forefathers delighted to bury an author. If I am to have my choice between white paper and dingy yellow, I choose white; and I have a decided preference for

octavo over folio, as being more portable. I do not care to have a portrait of my author, made by ruling a straight line for a nose, and striking semicircles for forehead and eyebrows; like that libellous effigy of Shakespeare which I have never forgiven Ben Jonson for certifying to. In vain for me does the cunning bookseller mark dirty, broken-backed, title-pageless, little books—trash with which the priest and barber in Don Quixote would have made short work—as quaint, curious, or very scarce. Verbiage, and pedantry, and silly conceits, do not, to my thinking, improve by age; nor are they, unhappily, so very scarce, that I should pay more for them than for wiser books. Bridget Elia might have trusted me with our last half-crown, secure that no rare old copy of anything should ever tempt me to return with an inedible substitute for the expected supper; nor would I have refused forgiveness to that meek and faithful maiden, though she had seized upon old Mateo Aleman's 'Spanish Rogue,' and cast him, fluttering like one of those belligerent tomes in the frontispiece to Boileau's 'Lutrin,' into the street below. Such books are properly sold with fine old paintings and rudely carven and worm-eaten old violins, in Soho. Their sellers are harpies, vampires, fosterers of human frailty for their own profit; they sit like spiders ready to dart out of their secret ambush, and pounce upon a victim before he has time to put on his spectacles; not like mild, unobtrusive philanthropists, who spread their feast of knowledge for all to taste, and taste again, before they buy.

But though I steer clear of this Scylla, the curiosity-shop, yet do I hold in equal horror that Charybdis, the popular bookstall, whose books are all bound in gaudy cloth, and are vaguely stated on the title-page to be "printed for the booksellers." There is no excitement here; no search for bargains; no curiosity to see what their authors are. I know them all beforehand, and their prices. That clumsy little row of novels, from the 'Farmer of Inglewood Forest' down to the 'Red Rover,' look cheap at ninepence each; such print or paper never came perhaps to Leipsic book-fair; but I know too well by what simple method all novels, long or short, in that series, are brought into one compass to have any interest in them. 'Clarissa Harlowe' was wont to be a little bulkier than Dr. Johnson's 'Rasselas,' if I am not mistaken. My 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments' were a continuous feast, and not a wretched mouthful, as I find them here. Three days I wept, in my youth, over the sorrows and perplexities of Amanda and Oscar Fitzalan, while here I may find those virtuous Children of the Abbey made free and happy in as many hours. That inexhaustible stereotyped edition of Shakespeare in one volume, I do believe, is honest. The text, perhaps, is mangled by the players, yet I think all the plays are there. But I abhor that edition. I hate its creaking back, its press-worn portrait of the author, its faint and smudged type. I would not read it out of an Austrian dungeon. No exception do I make in favour of that waistcoat-pocket edition of Burns, prose and poetry,

with its skeleton engravings, its memoir, notes, and laudatory verses, all complete; nor do I love Young's 'Night Thoughts' enough to run the risk of getting nearsighted in reading them. There was a time when I looked enviously at those very blue and crimson books, with their backs and edges glittering with gold, which the popular bookshop calls suitable for birthday presents, &c. They used to be arranged upon a table in our school-room when we broke up for the holidays, that all might see them before we drew lots. How I coveted once that 'Paul and Virginia' and the 'Indian Cottage' (those inseparable companions), with a copper-plate engraving of Paul, naked-footed, carrying Virginia over the brook, done upon thick whitey-brown paper, on which the ink would run so, if you tried to write your name on the back of it, that the letters all came together, and a blot would spread like a fire in the prairies. Mr. Gloss, my schoolmaster (who was on the whole such a good schoolmaster, as far as his limited powers and still more limited knowledge went, that I would not for the world call him *old* Gloss), held up that very 'Evenings at Home,' by Dr. Aikin and Mrs. Barbauld, once when we were alone, and asked me how I should like to have it; I fondly regarding the question as an earnest that the book would fall to me; but it didn't. Master Barlow got it and prized it not—offering it to me, soon after the holidays, for a complete string of livery buttons, which he had set his heart upon, and wouldn't hear of any substitute. There was a little book—I do not see it here, and

indeed I do not think it properly belonged to the popular bookstall—which was my prize, and which I should like to meet again. It was called the 'Dangers of Dutchland.' How euphoniously did that alliterative title strike my ear, as the prize list was read over. I had a presentiment that I should win it, and I did win it. It was a little drab volume in boards, neat enough; but not so delicate as my Cowper, which I had never been able to read with comfort for fear of soiling it, and which I had at last come to regard, not as a book to be read, but as a something to be kept clean.

I have read some circulating libraries through since then, and a few hundreds of other books, of which, I fancy, I might now read a good many and never suspect that I had seen them before; but I am quite ready to go through an examination on the Dangers of Dutchland now, though I lost it somehow years and years ago. Ask me about the diligence that overturned, and what the travellers said about the roads generally, and how the Dutch boatmen measure distances by the number of pipes they smoke. Request me to relate that affecting little episode of the young woman who went mad about tulips; or beg me, in the style of Mrs. Mangnall's questions, state generally my recollections of that work. If I had but found that little book here, I could not have perhaps been so hard on the popular bookseller.

And here, proceeding like a cautious philosopher, further to define and circumscribe my cardinal term, I entirely exclude from my idea of a bookstall those

dusty repositories of sallow calf-bound volumes, to be found about Chancery Lane and the Inns of Court. I never stopped at one of them save once, to buy a Delolme on the Constitution of England, because Junius praised it, and once again to get an old Blackstone with Mr. Christian's notes, which followed as a matter of course. Threadbare lawyers' clerks hang about them, and buy second-hand 'Introductions to Law Studies and Advice to Young Students,' with which they work themselves into temporary fits of enthusiasm, and think seriously of living on oatmeal porridge, in order to afford money for law books, which they intend to study all night—having previously given a farewell supper to all rackety friends and associates who might drop in and interfere with their design. 'But Fearne on Contingent Remainders' does not stir the spirit like allusions to the extraordinary rise of Chancellor Yorke; the first gust of determination dies away, and the sails soon begin to flap against the mast. There are some shops—generally near the hospitals—that sell nothing but second-hand medical works, where the whole of the last season's crop of books upon the German Spas, all addressed "To the Editor of something (torn out), with the Author's compliments," are sure to be found. In like manner there are shops whose staple is books upon divinity, most of which are not of the sort I care to take into the country with me, and read under a spreading beech tree, but, nevertheless, worth looking at when you are in the humour. These shops generally have a black bust of somebody

over the door. Their volumes are almost all folios or quartos, and are always in a good state of preservation, their thick-ribbed backs being newly varnished, and their lettering fresh as if just from the binder.

Stalls exclusively of school-books are not exactly in my way, but they, too, remind me pleasantly of school days, and so deserve five minutes. All of the good old school of school-books are here, and bound in sheepskin. None of your new-fangled numbers one, two, three, four, published by the Commissioners for that, or the Society for this. This 'Bonnycastle' was *my* tutor; this Pinnock was *my* historian; this 'Carpenter' was *my* spelling assistant. From this 'Goldsmith's Geography' it was that I learned that the Spaniard is "arrogant to his inferiors, proud to his equals, and submissive to his superiors," and that the Frenchman is "light, inconstant, and excessively vain." From this 'Speaker' of Enfield, of Warrington Academy, I was taught to prefer cheerfulness to mirth, and to despise those patricians who would have endeavoured, by indirect means, to depreciate the noble Marius in the esteem of the people. Here, in this sixpenny box—where the proprietor has cast in an odd volume of Euripides, in the absurd hope of inducing some one to buy it, not exactly because he understands Greek, but because it is so cheap—I find an old, coverless, dog-eared, pen-and-ink illustrated Virgil, precisely like mine was, and open it just at that tiresome passage in the Georgics about a peasant who, for some secret purpose connected with agriculture, delighted to drive home his sluggish ass with

a millstone or a load of black pitch, which, however, was no trouble in my estimation compared with that description of a plough a few pages earlier. Ah, that plough! Could any but a misanthrope with a particular spite against boys—foreseeing that his language would soon be defunct, and handed over for eternal dissection in all grammar schools and gymnasia throughout the world—have ever dreamed of giving directions in a score of hexameters for the construction of a plough? How I strove to reset its dislocated parts, which would not be brought together by any rules of syntax that I knew of; and finally gave it up, convinced that it never could be a description of any plough, unless it were the rude, ignorant contrivance of some soldier of the tenth legion, to whom that pattern of all the dedicatory virtues, Augustus Cæsar, had given the house and land of some unlucky Mantuan farmer, for his share of the plunder. Ah, well! school-books are a subject by themselves; and I did not set out to talk about them.

A man who confesses to being fond of a bookstall might be supposed, *à fortiori*, to be quite happy in Holywell Street, London, where the old, worn-out, pauper class of books have gained a permanent settlement. He might be pictured as ready at any time to brave the dangers of the narrow pass between the churches of St. Mary-le-Strand and St. Clement's Danes, so stoutly defended at its mouth by dealers in old clothes (who sally out and compel the passer-by to listen, though he may be as anxious as the wedding

guest to be at the feast), in order to spend a whole sunny afternoon in that wild garden of seedy literature. But such places are only a bewilderment to him. It is as if you should set an active sportsman to shoot in an aviary. He does not, to be sure, care to stay at sale-shops, where he is jostled by carpenters bidding for slop-made tools, for the sake of a few books which are always to be found there, imbedded among planes, and saws, and fishing-tackle, and rusty old pistols. There is nothing to speak of there, but Guthrie's 'Geography,' Walker's 'Gazetteer,' 1793, and some old, odd volumes of the 'Edinburgh Review.' Nor at rag-shops, to overhaul that small salvage from the waste-paper stock, consisting of old hymn books, 'Annual Registers,' Dodsley's selections of fugitive pieces, by several hands, dirty, spotted, imperfect volumes of Smollett or Fielding which no cheesemonger could use, without offending his customers. Their proprietors have an exaggerated notion of the worth of old rubbish, founded, I believe, upon traditions of little dirty volumes having been picked up at such places, and after much scrubbing being found to have valuable autographs on their covers, about which the seller subsequently went to law, and was sternly adjudged to abide by his bargain: or perhaps they have heard that there are bibliolaters addicted to the worship of fetishes, appearing to the vulgar eye to be equally unworthy of adoration; and so, in despair of ever getting at the secret of what constitutes their value, have resolved to protect themselves in a general suspicion of bookbuyers, and a determination

to ask that maximum price which, as a buyer itself, it is the rag-shop's proudest boast to give.

All these ninth parts of a bookstall my bibliophile passes by; for he is no literary glutton. Any bookstall whose outside stock a man, with moderate haste, might glance at in ten minutes, will content him. One such I know, which is my oldest favorite, and which comes up exactly to my ideal of what such a loitering place should be. Not wholly in the City's stir and noise, nor quite beyond it, is this my beloved bookstall. It is in a narrow passage, considerably frequented during the day; but it lies snugly in a little nook, so that any person approaching it must do so deliberately, and because he has determined it beforehand. This is good; for there are some who will linger just because the place lies in their way, and who, as they would have preferred a picture-shop themselves, never dream that they are keeping away more serious devotees.

It was a smaller place when I first knew it—just such a stall as Lackington or Hutton might have begun with; but I was less fastidious then. An old shoemaker had it first—a thin, lame old man, with gray whiskers. He had renounced his legitimate business, in defiance of the solemn warning of the Roman satirist, and betaken himself to the cobbling and patching of old books, in the hope of getting his livelihood that way; and if living on bread and water, washing his own shirt, and mending his own boots, would have enabled him to hold out, I believe he would have maintained the siege to this dav. I used to see him in the little

shop, reading, with a pair of spectacles with broad black rims, which he wore very low down his nose. I bought of him Defoe's 'Account of the Plague,' which I read and liked very much; till I found out that the author's part in it was all a fiction — a discovery which made the whole seem to me so much like a string of falsehoods, that I could hardly reconcile it with my ideas of ethics. The old shoemaker, to my astonishment, asked me about it next time I stopped there; and answered my objections, defending the author with very subtle casuistry; but though I could not answer him, I was not convinced. I always felt myself free to loiter there after that—whether I bought anything or not—for I had doubt in approaching a new place, whether I looked sufficiently like a buyer of books to test a bookstall keeper's patience; and not without reason, for I had not forgotten an insulting bookseller, who once snatched out of my hand a copy of Mungo Park's 'Travels,' and bade me "go on about my arrant," adding in the vain hope of soothing my wounded pride, the words "there's a good lad." I told him, to annoy him, that I was just thinking of buying it, as indeed I was; but that I wouldn't have it now at any price, at the same time holding up half a crown in proof of my power to do so, if I had pleased. But he did not believe me, and only repeated his offensive admonition, which stung me to the quick, insomuch that I never went down that street again, till a spy informed me that the bookseller had gone away, and that his shop was now devoted to

cutlery and hardware; a circumstance that induced me, I am afraid, to hope that he had failed, or that his goods had been seized for rent. My old cobbler was very patient; but the enemy was patient too, and pressed him closely. Want of capital was his trouble. He had a board outside with the words "Old Books Bought and Exchanged," but when people came to offer him bargains, he was frequently obliged to decline them. Some of them told him, saucily, that they didn't believe he bought books at all, and one (to my knowledge) to whom he had offered a ridiculously low price, in the certainty that it would be rejected, took him at his word, and compelled him to admit that he had been trifling with him. I bought of him, all in one week, Falconer's 'Shipwreck'—from a picture in which I learned the names of parts of a ship in order to astonish an old sailor whom I knew—Quarles's 'Emblems,' and the 'Lives of Washington and Lafayette' in one volume, and a portable Cyclopædia. These purchases, I believe, enabled him to stave off his bankruptcy for another fortnight. But he gave in at last, and went back into Huntingdonshire; being, as he told me the first time I talked with him, "a Huntingdonshire man, and" (as he invariably added, for he was not ashamed of his craft) "a shoemaker by trade."

I was sorry when he was gone, and hoped that the shop might be let for the same business again. We had no cheap and good magazines then. There was a number of twopenny publications called the 'Olio,' the 'Scorpion,' the 'Casket,' the 'Gleaner,' the 'Spy,'

and so forth; but they were very dull reading, being only extracts from biographies and histories, meagre descriptions of places, and odds and ends from moral writers to fill up the space at the end. Then there were penny 'Lives of Notorious Pirates and Highwaymen,' 'Tales of the Wars' (each number containing two great battles and a skirmish at least), 'Calendars of Horrors,' 'Accounts of Eccentric and Wonderful Characters,' none of which I cared for. Of the circulating libraries, I had read all the best works; and my taste was getting too fastidious for Miss Hannah Maria Jones, though her 'Rosaline Woodbridge' had seemed to me once an enchanting production. But there is no compassion for literary favorites when we get too proud to know them any longer. We never hesitate to speak contemptuously of them, no matter how much they formerly laboured to the best of their ability to amuse us. So I used to say, proudly, that "I could not read such trash as that," and to feel that the bookstalls must furnish me with something more befitting my improved taste. The shop did open as a bookseller's again; and with a much better stock than before. The new proprietor was a German, and he had always a number of foreign books for sale, which made me feel very much ashamed of having studied French for four years at Mr. Gloss's, without having learned a word of it; but I made amends for that at last. I carried off one day a little London edition of Voltaire's 'Henriade,' which Herr Müller (the new proprietor), having but an imperfect notion of the

value of English words, had labelled "Poetry, very nice;" but I thought it a dull book, even after I had found out the secret of reading French verses. Rousseau's 'Nouvelle Héloise,' of which I bought for a trifle a neatly printed Paris edition, in bright green covers with red labels at the back, wearied me out before I got through the first volume. So did some plays of Racine, which I had been tempted to buy in consequence of reading a glowing eulogium upon them by an English author, though I tried hard to like them. I began to suspect that there was some secret compact among writers to pretend to like French literature, though they didn't. I gave it up; and, for a while, took to Italian, and bought a cheap copy of Goldoni's best comedies, which were a real treasury of humour, when I had got the key to them.

Herr Müller stopped there some years, smoking all the time, and doing nothing else, as far as I could see. He sold his business at last, and went back, like his predecessor, to his native place. His principal grievance against England was the high impost on tobacco; by reason of which I believe he had been contributing to the revenues of the British Government considerably more than his fair proportion.

Bookseller number three is there still, and is a real man of business. He is always binding books, to augment their value, in a back-room; and he writes such ornamental labels as would rejoice the heart of a Chinese. He classifies books; always knows what he has; and prints now and then a little "catalogue *raisonnée*"

of his stock. His shelves and boxes of books have gradually extended themselves around the walls of the little nook in which his shop stands—an encroachment that is winked at by the Commissioners of Pavements. In that peaceful haven a few bookworms may always be found; some turning over the leaves of the several illustrated folios on architecture or topography, and others laboriously diving into shilling and sixpenny boxes.

Are they simply bargain hunting? Perhaps so. For myself, although I am not fond of haggling, yet I never wish to become so rich as to be indifferent to a decided bargain, when I meet with one at a bookstall.

THE ABBOT'S GARDEN.

If there be any moment in all the four-and-twenty hours of the nightless days of summer solstice, in which the traffic and turmoil of this mighty city of London may be said to cease—at which that turbulent stream, which is never quite run out, might seem to linger for the turn of flood — perhaps it would be found on the dial, not very far from the hour of two ante meridian. There is an interval of comparative stillness about that time, which any patient disciple of Bacon, standing with watch in hand, might mark to a minute or two. It is neither perfect silence nor intelligible sound. It is the momentary rest in the grand symphony of life, which, before the chords have ceased to vibrate, will gradually break again into the crash and rush of instruments.

Since the clocks struck two, I have walked through a full mile of streets where, in the day-time, I am jostled, elbowed, and bewildered by a noisy crowd, and have found them all deserted; for I do not count policemen for anything; nor an occasional proprietor of a breakfast stall going loaded to his stand; nor an Irish family sleeping on the church steps of St. Andrew's, Holborn; nor a jolly angler whom I met trudging along an hour before daybreak, with rod and basket; nor a row of

THE ABBOT'S GARDEN.

Page 254.

scavengers sweeping the wood pavement; nor the only cabman on the stand, dozing on his box, with chin sunk in his coat collar. All these, if I were about to compose, in imitation of the writers of the last century, "A City Night Piece," I might use from their association with early morning, to prepare the mind of the reader for a picture of solitude and silence. Nor would I hold the drunken man, whom I encountered "tacking" in Middle Row—and with whom I came in collision, in spite of a careful attempt to adapt my steering to his—to be less suggestive of the hour. But Lincoln's Inn Fields should be my culminating point. There is no sign of life there: not a glimmer of light at any attic window: not one policeman: not a sound but my own footsteps and the rustle of leaves in the great enclosure.

Great Queen Street, too, is silent; but I hear a noise, like the tic tac of a water wheel, from a waggon crawling up Drury Lane, and confused sounds of carts and men greet my ear in Long Acre. A slow movement has already broken out in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden Market. Rows of carts and vans and costermongers' barrows are beginning to form in the middle of the roadway in Bow Street. Lights are in the upper windows of public houses—not of inhabitants retiring to rest, but of active proprietors preparing already for the new day. Files of horses, jingling chains at their heels, go down to stables in back streets. Women and men with hampers hurry on, all in one direction. The early bird is not awake yet, nor, perhaps, is the worm,

but the preparations for the great market-day are already begun, and my friend Mr. Trench is at his post.

Mr. Trench's waggons have been here since midnight. Speculators have been already bargaining with him for the purchase of whole loads of cabbages for Spitalfields and the Borough Markets. Capitalists who buy vegetables as a stock-jobber will buy scrip, have been tempting him before daylight with offers to take upon themselves the risk of a fall in the market, by buying the whole of his stock at once: but he judges it better to hold it for the regular dealers. Many waggons, filled too high to go through Temple Bar, have been already sold in this way; their horses, that had gone down to the stables for a quiet night, turned out and harnessed again to take their load away without "breaking bulk:" but the gaps they have left have been filled up again, and more waggons are coming in from every side. The roadway is already blocked up, and the by-streets are rapidly filling. Light vans are unloading in order to hasten home and to fill again. Florists' carts are setting down their pots in every nook and corner; and pavement and kerb and gutter blossom with balsams and geraniums. Work will begin in earnest at daybreak.

Four hundred years ago, before the battle between Town and Country gave any token of ever reaching as far west as this; when the struggle was so slow and spiritless, that kings and queens had not yet deemed it necessary to espouse the country cause, and endeavour

by solemn Acts of Parliament to check the alarming increase of houses in this city, and restrain the number of the inhabitants thereof within reasonable bounds, this spot was already famous for kitchen vegetables—not, indeed, as the market where they were sold, but as a garden where they grew. Sturdy monks, who were the only cultivators of vegetables in those troublous times, doffed their gowns, and dug the ground, and planted here, in their own rude way, radishes, skirrel, pompions, cabbages, and such things, for the use of the Abbot and Convent of Westminster; whence this place was known as Convent Garden, or in French from the time of the Normans, Couvent Garden. But the monks were not allowed to enjoy their garden long after that. A terrible storm swept them, with all their costumes and properties, from the face of the land. The Crown took possession of the monks' garden, and afterwards gave it to the Duke of Somerset. The Duke himself fell into trouble five years after, and Edward the Sixth revoked his gift and gave it to the Bedford family, who have kept it ever since. The new possessor built immediately a house upon his own ground; a modest wooden edifice beside the Strand, from the back windows of which he looked across meadows to a long shady avenue of trees, called St. Martin's Lane.

About this time, our kitchen vegetables, which had so fallen into disuse in the times of the wars as to be almost totally unknown, began to come again into fashion. Peas and cabbages, grown stale and withered in a long sea voyage, fetched extravagant prices; until

men sent abroad for roots and seeds no longer to be found in England, and began to plant them near London. "Master Samuel Hartlib," to whom Milton addresses his gigantic scheme of education, knew some old men (he says) in his time, who recollected the first gardener who came into Surrey to plant cabbages and cauliflowers, and to grow turnips, carrots, parsnips, and early ripe peas, all of which were great wonders then. These earliest of market gardeners looked about for certain convenient spots in London and Westminster, where they might be allowed to stand and sell their produce unmolested. A small space, just under the Duke's garden wall, at the back of the new mansion, was one of these places; and thither the buyers, finding out on what days of the week they would be sure to find them there, soon began to come.

Covent Garden Market, like the English constitution, was not founded in a day. Many markets with spacious accommodation for any kind of trade have been planned and built; first stones have been laid and silver trowels wielded by lily hands; solemn grants of charters have been obtained; grand banquets and inaugural processions have proclaimed to the world, amid the beating of drums, that the great market was open. But the public will not come to a market, be it ever so grand. The market must come to them; consequently, the passages of these architectural marts sometimes fall into the hands of mangling-women, and cobblers, and working cabinet-makers. Lenders of trucks, and removers of goods in town and country, retailers of coals and greens,

reside in their shops—"a world too wide" for them to hope to make a show there with their slender stock. Their pumps have been turned to alien uses; their great half-finished public-houses, which were to do a roaring business for ever after the grand inauguration, have dwindled into wretched beer-shops; their "Bye-laws of this Market" have become a mockery and a byword. Not one of them has flourished like this Covent Garden, the monarch of green-markets, whose inaugurator was the first market-gardener who approved of the spot, and set his burden down against the wall.

Soon after this, the proprietor of the land, not caring particularly about the rural prospect from his back windows, determined to build a church, and a grand square with a colonnade around it, in the Italian fashion, to be called the Piazza—not the colonnade which has now monopolised the name, but the square itself—that word signifying, in the Italian tongue, an open place or square. For this purpose, he consulted Inigo Jones, who drew the designs. The church and the square were built soon after; although the colonnade was only finished on two sides. This was then the only square in London, and was considered the very head-quarters of fashion. Noble and wealthy families dwelt under the colonnade, and in mansions round about. Idlers of high degree, of both sexes, flocked thither; playwrights laid their scenes of intrigue and humour there; every comedy of town life had allusions to the Piazza; and so deeply had that word impressed itself on the minds of the parish authorities, that for nearly a century, as the

church registers will show, all children found in the neighbourhood were christened John, or James, or Mary Piazza.

Meanwhile nobody noticed the progress of the obscure little market, behind the Duke's wall. No hardy gardener had dared to carry his wares into the haunt of fashion. Cabbages or onions had not yet been brought between the wind and their nobility. But, one day, the modest wooden edifice was pulled down; the brick wall was demolished, and surveyors with haughty contempt for vested interests began coolly to lay down plans for new streets upon the very ground of the vegetable market. The market gardeners were driven back into the very centre of the great square, where they turned and made a stand, and compelled the idlers to idle elsewhere. The wealthy and noble families fled further west, never to return, leaving their houses to vintners, coffee-house keepers, actors, and artists. The triumph of the market was complete. There were, indeed, lovers of the sublime and beautiful who grieved still over the desecration of the once-fashionable Piazza —"a magnificent square," says Maitland, a hundred years ago, "wherein (to its great disgrace) is kept a herb and fruit market, two charity schools, one meeting-house, a parish workhouse, a cold bath, and a playhouse." Very offensive, indeed, to a poetical eye! Nevertheless, the artists were content to dwell here. Under the colonnade, Sir James Thornhill kept his school for artists, and in his house immortal Hogarth (that terrible moralist) painted and exhibited gratis his

Mariage à la Mode. Somewhere in the square lived bearish Wilson, and money-getting Sir Peter Lely, and Sir Godfrey Kneller, great in the portraiture of bâtons and flowing periwigs; besides Zoffany, the actors' portrait painter, and Lankrink, and Closterman, and a host of others less known to fame. The charity schools are gone. So are the meeting-house and the workhouse. The playhouse has turned its back upon the place. The cold bath is not what it was; but the market, after being winked at in all its encroachments for a couple of centuries, has been finally recognised.

Daylight has come on since I have been musing here. The night coffee-house down the street, whose painted blind is drawn up all awry, has just turned out its last customer, and shut the door. Objects at a distance are growing more and more distinct, and now a man with a ladder hurries on from lamp to lamp and puts the lights out. The illuminated clock of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, waxes pale, and strikes three. Proprietors of waggons, who have been sleeping in public-houses and coffee-houses, in order to be in time for business, are out; the crowd, the bustle, the hum of Saturday morning have begun. "Business never stops here," says an old man at my elbow. "'T aint only the three regular market days, but every day, from morning till night—come when you will, something 's a-doing." From all the five inlets to the great square —choked to the throats with every description of thing that goes on wheels — costermongers with baskets, porters in knee-breeches, "hagglers," fruiterers, green-

grocers, eating-house keepers, salesmen, and carters swell the restless multitude. They invest the building on all sides; they duck and bob under upturned shafts; they pour in, denser still, through narrow passages, and circulate in the maze of stalls within. Fruit-sellers, perched upon boxes, empty out their cornucopias on the crowd below. Sacks of peas and potatoes glide down from waggon tails upon the backs of porters, who grapple their burdens with hooks of steel, and plunge with them into the crowd. I see crews of boarders who dash into waggons and cast their cargoes overboard; men who clamber to the summits of towers of cabbages and begin to level them to the shafts; gangs—whom the crazy Spanish knight would at once have taken for robbers plundering a caravan—sacking spring-carts; wholesale buyers who commit tremendous ravages in the ranks of flower-pots; amazons in drab great-coats with metal buttons, and flattened bonnets, who lay violent hands upon hampers; brawny giants straining and bending under deal cases. How they swarm and jostle each other! How they dive into and cleave a way through the multitude, regardless of every man's business but their own! "Now then! travel on," is the cry. What is this tall wicker column, like that terrible Saxon idol which the priests were wont to cram with living people and set fire to? This way it comes; four feet ten of human thew and muscle and fifteen feet perpendicular of circular baskets fitted one upon the other. Gone! and the furrow in its wake closed up in an instant. Hold, my friend Hindbad, with the

one eye! Not Argus himself might hope to carry those fuchsias through this mob, without loss or damage to their delicate pendant bells of crimson and purple; and wilt thou think to guide them scatheless, and to run too, O less happy than the Cyclops, whose solitary organ of sight is conveniently placed in the precise middle of his forehead? Yes, he does hope to do it, and will do it; more dexterous than that waiter from the coffee-house near by, whose spoons rattle in his cups as the crowd buffet him here and there; whose saucers are flooded with coffee; whose white bread and butter has become a brown sop. He rears his tray aloft, and tries to balance it on the tips of the fingers of one hand, and vents angry words upon the crowd that heeds him not. Look at this grizzly black man with the strawberry-pottles under his arm. Easily he gets along, grinning with his rows of ivory teeth, because the sellers from their little fortified citadels call him Uncle Tom. Not a single one will he lose of those large "toppers," blushing under the dark-green leaves. Also at this cheerful old man, who has walked all the way from Croydon this morning, with a sweet-smelling basket of white flowers which he calls "double rocket," and all (as he tells me afterwards) for the sake of earning half a crown, less tenpence market fees for his stand under the church. Also at the thin young widow woman in a short gown, and with a baby under her shawl, who has come to lay out her miserable capital in some sort of vegetable stock to sell again—nearly all coppers—which she holds screwed up in paper in her

hand. She wins her way along by meekly begging them "to mind her little 'un"—strong in her weakness. Not like that Irish giant, whom I saw just now pitch down and damage a load of cauliflowers, because the owner haggled about the porterage, and who now essays to force a passage through the crowd, by turning his sacks of peas crosswise, and knocking people down with them. A watchful officer of the market stops him, and warns him to carry his wares according to established rule; whereon the Irish giant is fain to apologise and is absolved.

Thinner and less bustling is the crowd under the Piazza; as, in obedience to custom, we are compelled to call it. Hawkers of account-books, dog-collars, whips, chains, curry-combs, pastry, money-bags, braces, tissue-paper for the tops of strawberry-pottles, and horse-chestnut leaves for the garnishing of fruit-stalls; coffee-stalls and stalls of pea-soup and pickled eels; basket-makers; women making up nosegays; girls splitting huge bundles of water-cress into innumerable little bunches; and men who write with their toes,—possess the Piazza from Great Russell Street to the entrance to the underground saloon of the superior Vocal Entertainment. The poor, light-haired, sunburnt young man with the broken boots and dusty appearance, whom I saw before daylight, sleeping with his stick and bundle in a blue handkerchief in the midst of the market, has been driven from his refuge, and has flung himself down upon the stone pavement here and gone to sleep again. Before, he had for neighbours

a thick-set, sturdy-looking beggar, with a black beard of three weeks' growth, and a pale, dirty gent, who sat back to back upon a heap of baskets, and dozed and nodded with their hands in their pockets; fondly trusting to a tradition of other times, that here the unfortunate might find a sure sleeping-place, without fear of disturbance. They too must have been driven out; but I don't find them here. I think I saw the beggar slinking down Tavistock Street in the direction of the Adelphi dark arches some time ago; but the gent is gone I know not whither—perhaps to wander about the great squares further west—feeling himself very much like Cain or the wandering Jew. The sun-burnt young man is too fast asleep to hear anything of the noise about him, or to heed the row of water-cress girls; one of whom stops now and then from her task to tickle his ear with the point of a rush. I fancy he is dreaming of having enlisted in the army; being on a long march somewhere, and feeling very foot-sore, and anxious for the word to halt. The police inspector with the narrow waist and padded bosom looks at him and kindly passes on.

The clock of Saint Paul's, Covent Garden, is striking four; as, mindful of my appointment with the Clerk of the Market, I mount the granite staircase, towards the famed conservatories on the roof. That gentleman is in his little counting-house, giving an audience to a few old Irishwomen, all anxious to obtain a badge and number qualifying them to act as porters in the Market. One shilling and sixpence they have to pay for this, not

as a fee, but by way of deposit, to be returned to them when the badge is given up. "When we have got this, and satisfied ourselves that they have given a true address," says the Clerk of the Market, "we have some hold upon them. No one will trust them with goods without seeing a badge. There are some hanging about the market now unable to obtain a job, because they have left their badges as a deposit for drink at some public-house or beer-shop. We can't prevent that."

I am conducted higher up the granite staircase to the roof; whence, leaning on the stone balustrade, we (I and the clerk) contemplate calmly the bustling crowd beneath. This side (the eastern) is called the Essex side, to our right is the Surrey side; the waggons from those parts stopping always at the nearest point. The crowd is busier here than at any other part. "But not so much confusion as there used to be," says my companion. "We compel the waggons in the markets, as well as the carts in the adjoining streets, to keep a passage clear, as you see, on each side of the roadway. A few years ago they would block up the way entirely, and dealers were often afraid to venture in far, lest they should be compelled to wait until the market was nearly over, to get released. For this reason, some would buy of the nearest waggons without troubling themselves to go further. When the buyers complained, and we proposed to introduce a better system, many of the sellers opposed it. They had a notion that the difficulty of circulation 'made good for trade' in some way.

But I think they are beginning to be convinced now of the contrary."

"An old story, and very like an allegory in the history of two great political parties."

My conductor catches my meaning, and smiles. "As to Free Trade," he says, "it is a mere habit with our market gardeners to grumble at it. Perhaps it may hurt them a little in the bringing of early supplies. Our people don't get now such extravagant prices for the first lots sent to market; but these high prices were never paid for any great quantities. For the rest, business is better for all parties than it used to be. Now, we have fruits and vegetables from all parts of the world. Peas, and asparagus, and new potatoes, not only from the South of France, but from Belgium, Holland, Portugal (though only a few years ago the English residents there had to send to England for their supplies), and the Bermudas; wherever, in short, they can grow them, if the distance or means of transit will allow them to be in time for the early markets. Speculators buy these alongside the steam-vessels at Blackwall or Southampton, and bring them to market here. Our railways, too, bring us tons from localities where people never dreamt of supplying the London market. Years ago we talked of Deptford onions and Battersea cabbages, Mortlake asparagus, Chelsea celery, and Charlton peas. So we do now; but immense quantities come to us from Cornwall and Devonshire, the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey, the Kentish and Essex banks of the Thames, the banks of

the Humber, the Mersey, the Orwell, the Trent, and the Ouse. The Scilly Isles, which are almost totally cultivated as market gardens, and produce excellent articles, and always very early, used to send their supplies no further than Cornwall, and barter them for what goods they wanted. Now, the Cornish people grow for themselves and London too; and the Scilly Isles find it better to send their produce by steamer to Southampton, whence it comes here. Yet, notwithstanding all these new competitors, the market gardens around London are constantly extending. That carrier's waggon with the light iron wheels, which you see there just arrived, comes from the Great Western Railway station. Those long wooden cases are filled with new potatoes, and strawberries very carefully packed. The strawberries are from gardens round about Bath. The potatoes, if, as I suppose, they come from Cornwall, must have paid thirty-five shillings per ton carriage. But the Great Northern and other railways are beginning to see the new trade that may be created, and are lowering their rates. They must put on more night trains, too," adds my informant, "if they would be of service to us. The railway supplies are apt to arrive late, when trade begins to flag. I have known a heavy arrival after the first buyers are gone to bring the prices down fifty per cent. in a moment—an obvious hardship to the earlier buyers."

In answer to my inquiries about the fluctuations in prices at this market, of which I have heard some marvellous accounts, my informant tells me that these

have become comparatively rare of late years. Except in a case such as mentioned above, prices are generally steady. The market gardeners on looking round the market know what is the supply of the morning, and fix their prices accordingly—rarely departing from them. They endeavour, moreover, by every means to fit their supply to the demand, so that a balance is generally well preserved. They watch for any circumstances calculated to create an extraordinary demand, and will even transmit a message by telegraph to various parts of England, to order or countermand a supply, as events may determine. Potatoes, which are sold almost exclusively on the southern side of the market, have of course greatly fallen off in quantity since the ravages of the disease. It is calculated that not one half the amount of the original supply comes now to market; although the extent of land cultivated with potatoes has been increasing every year since the appearance of the scourge. The potatoes that escape fetching higher prices than they used, the growers, of course, find their cultivation no less profitable than before.

My guide, with more peaceful intentions than a French statesman when he can't persuade his friends to his way of thinking, proposes to "descend into the street." Walking on, somewhat bewildered with the crowd, I notice objects in the shifting panorama which he points out, and listen to his remarks, until I know instinctively all he tells me. He seems to have gifted me with some subtle analytical power, by which, in

smallest hints and signs, I read the secrets of all things about me.

I merely glance, for example, at yonder stout, ruddy-complexioned little man, and know him at once to be Mr. Squareit, of somewhere down Dagenham way. I know that he began life without a sixpence, and is not ashamed to own it, and that he is now the largest market gardener in England, perhaps in the world; for he has five hundred acres of land on the banks of the Thames, all in the highest state of garden cultivation. I know him to be filled with knowledge, mostly gathered by his own experiments, in the use of manures—using such odd out-of-the-way things for that purpose as no farmer or other market gardener thinks of using. I know, moreover, that he sends five times as much to this market as any other single producer, and that his things are always earliest and best.

That coaxing old woman with the red nose, who is pulling Mr. Squareit by the arm, and calling him a "jewel" and "a dear boy," and many other tender things, all *apropos* of the price of a certain "junket o' carrots" about as big as marbles, I am able at once to recognise as the leader of that band of old women to whom the benevolent Marquis of Cristal in an unlucky hour gave half-a-sovereign; being induced thereto by a piteous story of "hard frost and nothink doin'." I know that the hard frost referred to never broke up, and that his lordship, being fond of a walk in the Centre Avenue, is now compelled to descend from

his carriage in the Strand, and walk hither on foot. I know also that this stratagem has been discovered, and that the coaxing old woman and her associates have means, little short of miraculous, for divining the moment of his lordship's arrival. Finally, I know that the benevolent marquis has appealed to the police for protection in vain; and that nothing but a high sense of his duty to society, and of his dignity as an English nobleman, prevents his offering to compromise the matter, by pensioning off the coaxing old woman and her friends with a small annuity.

I know that yonder is the great pea-grower, who will send to one firm in a single day four hundred sacks of from twelve to fifteen pecks each, besides four or five hundred sieves of a superior kind; and that there are other growers who will send to single dealers in one day seven or eight waggons of cabbages, or fourteen to fifteen hundred bushels of sprouts. I am reminded by this, of calculations made a few years since, that six or seven hundred thousand pottles of strawberries, forty or more millions of cabbages, two millions of cauliflowers, three hundred thousand bushels of peas, seven hundred and fifty thousand lettuces, and half a million bushels of onions, are sold here annually. And that the annual amount of money paid for fruits and vegetables in this market cannot be less than three millions sterling.

I become aware that all this part of the roadway, from the pit-door of the opera house to the corner of James Street, is called Casualty Side, because the waggons pay for their standings here by the day; and

that yonder they pay a yearly rent for a small frontage, whether they come every market day or not. I meet a peace officer, and know that there are eight such in the market; and that the regular police never come here unless called in to aid or to take a charge. He, I see, is thinking about the iron electro-plated florins, which he knows are in circulation this morning; for coiners bring such things here and dispose of them to utterers whom they know by sight to be "safe men." Unlucky sellers, having no counter to ring them on, take them in the bustle and hurry of business; and, hastening home, congratulate themselves upon the rapid disposal of their wares; until, staying at some halfway house for refreshment, they tender a bright florin, which is rejected. They apologise and tender another, which is rejected also. Whereupon, as has happened before now, the unfortunate market gardener, not being known, is detained and searched, and his pockets being found to be filled with the objectionable coin, is cast into a dungeon, and kept there until he can clear his character, to the great alarm of his family. My peace officer has just been cautioning some persons of these things; but they think themselves much too sharp for anything of that, and won't heed what he says, "till they 're bit." Which is just how smashing flourishes.

I now begin to know that a great deal of pilfering goes on in the market. Sacks and measures, as well as baskets worth four pounds ten shillings a dozen, vanish unaccountably when not looked after. Artful children, looking much too young to do anything wrong, are

regularly brought down here to steal by parents and friends, who wait and watch their movements from under the Piazza. Their favorite plan is to carry a stick with a pin in the end of it, which they slily stick into apples and oranges, as they pass by, transferring them to their pockets with the dexterity of jugglers, They know very well that market people content themselves with cuffing, and rarely give a thief into custody, whether young or old, which is why thieving flourishes.

Gazing upon high piles of strawberry pottles, I perceive that they are made by women and girls "down in Kent," who get about a penny a dozen, and earn good wages at that rate, while the season lasts; and I also perceive that a pottle of strawberries would be algebraically represented by any of the last three letters of the alphabet, being essentially "an unknown quantity." For there are strawberry pottles of all dimensions—from those which hold twelve ounces (the legitimate and traditional size) down to those that, having their slender ends stuffed with leaves, will scarcely hold five ounces, which, I am sorry to know, are the most common. I know that it is at all times more satisfactory to buy my strawberries in round flat baskets called "Punnets," about two inches deep, and of various diameter, to hold a half-pound, one pound, and two pounds; for in these I cannot be tricked by tapering bottoms or leaves, or a few outsiders covering a quantity of trash below.

What is there in the face of that old man with the bare throat and loose handkerchief, who wears knee

breeches and a jacket, and carries on his head a close-fitting cap with a small rim, turned up all round like a pewter bowl, or the helmet of a Venetian soldier in a melo-drama—which tells me that he may be taken as a type of the regular Market porter? I know that if I were to ask him, he could tell me stories in which he devoutly believes, of the days when the Prince Regent would come down to the market very drunk, and in disguise, and submit to be rolled into the baskets and carried about on men's shoulders, as all real gentlemen did in those days; of how Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox would drop into "The Finish" after a late debate. Of how, in that golden age, he could sometimes pick up a pound in the morning, though now "his jints is stiffer than they was, and the young 'uns gets the advantage of him." In these degenerate days, if I mistake not, he is glad of a fourpenny or sixpenny "turn" from the greengrocers—though some engage him at half-a-crown or five shillings per week to do all their work, much or little—and he is compelled to eke out a living by carrying home goods from the auction rooms, and serving as a scene-shifter at one of the minor theatres.

Of a different race is this man with the long greasy fustian coat with large-flapped pockets and gilt buttons, with the green and red-brown silk pocket-handkerchief round his neck, and the purple travelling cape turned up at the ears. I know him for a thorough coster-monger. He dwells in some court within a court, some rookery's inmost core near Drury Lane, or Red Cross Street, Clerkenwell. Perhaps his father was a coster-

monger; or perhaps he doesn't remember his father or mother; in which case the market was no doubt his Alma Mater. Or it is possible that he followed some trade once; but, being out of employment, took to costermongering a little, and has remained a costermonger ever since. For I do not pretend to be more explicit than another clairvoyant. I know for a certainty that there are about three thousand of his class who attend this market in summer time, and that they buy one tenth of all that is sold here. I know that if each has a barrow or a basket, as he must have, it is not his; for why should he think of saving money to buy one, or ever living otherwise than on the old hand-to-mouth eat-and-drink-in-summer-and-starve-in-winter plan of costermongers in general? If he wants a common barrow, or a barrow with a board, are there not five thousand of them to let on hire in London for a daily or weekly rent, averaging about a thousand per cent. per annum upon their value? If he wants a donkey he may borrow that too. He might buy a donkey in Smithfield at any price between five shillings and three pounds; but why should he, when he can hire one for three shillings a week? He can have even his stock bought for him by the barrow master; or from the same benevolent individual he can get the loan of a capital of ten shillings, at the moderate interest of sixpence a day. He can have a shallow basket worth a shilling for a penny a day; a battered pewter quart pot, or a pair of scales, for two-pence a day; an honest weight for a penny a day, or a "slang one" for two-

pence. What occasion then has he for any property but his hands? What need of any revenue but his own good spirits?

In the matter of drinking, I only peep into one or two public-houses, and know at once that the old system of drinking strong liquors on market mornings to counteract the raw morning air has long been dying away. The very public-houses look like a dissolving view of a gin-shop slowly changing into the interior of a coffee-house. I observe that there is still a lingering faith in rum and milk as a morning draught; but it is fading, and I hear not the name of early purl. Market people order coffee, and bread and butter, and cold meat; for I do not confound with them a glassy-eyed young woman in the parlour, alone, with a short thick little glass empty beside her; nor a pale shabby young man in spectacles, who sits with his back to the wall, and his legs resting on the bench, and lingers there (having nowhere particular to go to) on the ground of having ordered something several hours ago.

Centre Row is awake and open now; but what may I find here that all the world does not know? I have been through Centre Row hundreds of times in summer and winter, and wondered who were the wealthy luxurious individuals who did not hesitate to pamper themselves with hothouse grapes at twenty-five shillings a pound, with pottles of British Queens or Black Princes at one shilling an ounce, with slender French beans at three shillings a hundred, peas at two pounds a quart, and new potatoes at four shillings and six-pence a pound;

and never knew till now that they are mostly bought by kindly friends as a surprise for invalids and sickly and afflicted persons. It was worth walking through here to know that. I never knew till now that the fruiterers here (who seem to be always having tea or coffee, and to divide their time between mugs, account-books, gold fish and the vegetable world) can pay four or five hundred pounds per annum for the rent of a little shop, and that their shops pass from father to son, or to their nominees by will, on payment of a fine, almost in the same way as copyhold property. I did not know that the late Mr. Johnquil—who did not know how to write his name, and was never anxious to learn—made thirty thousand pounds in one of these little Ionic pens. I was not aware that one back shop keeps sixty persons during the season constantly shelling peas; nor that nosegay-making has been an art since the Duchess of Sutherland made it one; nor that girls who practise it skilfully can earn an easy living. Much less did I suspect that a wedding nosegay will sometimes cost two guineas; or that those little bouquets in cut paper, which the *première danseuse* picks up and sniffs and smiles at, and presses to the rim of her corset, and feigns to guard as inestimable treasures, have cost from five to ten shillings each.

And now, having bid good morning to my guide, I find myself alone, and am sensible of nothing but being very tired, and feeling as if I could even sleep in any of the hotels around the market in spite of the noise without. The shady burial ground—behind the church (of

which I caught a glimpse in passing a little grated doorway in Henrietta Street), where the author of Hudibras, Wycherley the dramatist, Dr. Arne, Macklin, and a host of writers still to be heard of in the 'Elegant Extracts,' sleep under the sycamore trees—leaves a tranquil image in the mind after all this crowd and bustle.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

If old Fitz-Baynard, of the Old Fellows' lodge of Odd Fellows, would listen to my advice—old man as I am—I could give him a hint how to make himself a little less ridiculous to our club. He looks like the choleric, retired uncle, in all the farces at the Haymarket Theatre. Dosen't he know that his camlet roquelaire, with a poodle collar, has been superseded, five outer-garments deep? Its only merit is, that it hides that absurd, sparrow-tailed, blue dress-coat, with gilt buttons, which he is so fond of buttoning tightly up to his chin. Five-and-twenty years ago he wore his coat stuffed and wadded all over, like that, and close-buttoned up, with the exception of the third button from the top; where, to this day, he stuffs in his crimson pocket-handkerchief, which always hangs—accidentally, of course—half out. But what is to hide that chimney-pot hat, with a broad, turned-up brim? or those boots, coming to a point, like a pair of flat-irons? His eye-glass would be all right enough if he would keep it in his eye, and look about him; though that heavy bunch of seals, with their stones the colour of anchovy sauce, dangling by a broad bit of black ribbon, is a positive eyesore. Then why is he continually disparaging

young people? Let me tell him young men are the blood of the nation; they keep the world in motion.

Our club calls itself the "Youthful Britons," not because we are all young fellows, but because our taste and opinions are exactly opposed to those of old Fitz-Baynard. Three-score years, with us, is no objection to a man, so long as he keeps his head up, and does not hold the belief that whatever is is right, and whatever is not oughtn't to be. Our opinion is that things generally might be a great deal better than they are; and that, whether in fashions, politics, or social economics, when a man comes forward to do a little good, even though he should propose to disturb the existing order of things a little, he is entitled to fair play. If any member uses the word "Utopian," we fine him. Not that we believe that there are many things well deserving of that adjective; but, first, because we have seen so many Utopian schemes pass into realities, that we are suspicious of it; and, secondly, because the word, from the time of Sir Thomas More downwards, has been so much abused that we think every honest man ought to scratch it out of his dictionary. Why, the very steel pen with which I write this, was once an Utopian steel pen—a new fangled pen—a mere toy—a thing that never could and never would supersede the good, old, stout goose-quill, that you went cutting away, and notching, and slitting up the middle, and pointing, and nibbing every quarter of an hour. There was not an old man in the three kingdoms—unless it was a schoolmaster, sick of hearing little boys standing of a

row beside his desk all day, with the eternal refrain of "Pleasir, will you mend my pen?"—who did not say that they would not answer. In vain we pointed to the increase of the number who were taught to write, the spread of literature, and the insufficiency of all the geese in the kingdom to the growing demand for feathers. They shook their heads. "You will do as you please, sir; but give me a good, strong-barrelled, goose-quill." And so say their survivors to this day. They don't believe in the millions of grosses that are said to be made in Birmingham every day. "They don't know. *They* never see anything but quills wherever they go. Where are they all, if such a number is made?" If there had been none but old men, we should have had no steel pens to this day. But the boys took them up. They wrote the Creed with them in the size of a split pea; they did the Ten Commandments, and illustrated them with spread eagles and cherubim, and set them up in the windows of steel-pen makers, until there was no shutting the eyes to their merits, and a revolution was partially accomplished. We all use steel pens to a man. I will add that when that admirable invention, a candle that requires no snuffing, was universally decided to be fandangle, we unanimously adopted it; and have never had a pair of snuffers on our tables since.

When Mr. Winsor lighted his house with gas, the 'Edinburgh Review' said it wouldn't do; and the Fitz-Baynards of 1805 applauded, and thought that they and the reviewers had put it out for ever. Now, even Westminster Hall—the last place where a man would

look for novelty—is lighted with it. When I look around me, and see the endless variety of new-fangled things, which it has been confidently said a thousand times "would never do," but which have now become familiar servants, or absolute necessaries, I am inclined to propose that the word "Utopian" be reinstated; and that its employment, in a youthful Britonian sense, be henceforth encouraged. Have we not Utopian Railways, and Utopian Ragged Schools; impossible Telegraphs; ruinous Free Trade, and dangerous Law Courts—where plaintiff and defendant are admitted to give evidence, in direct opposition to one of the most venerable law maxims in the immortal Latin language; all in full operation, and the constitution as sound as ever? Why, then, should we shrink from admitting that the abolition of the Court of Chancery is somewhat Utopian; and that the demolition of Temple Bar, and removal of Smithfield and slaughter-houses, are notions a little tainted with fandangleism?

Personally, I do not mind acknowledging that I am fond of novelty. I like to be up to the time. One or two instances will suffice to show what I mean. I can remember the Kembles, Cooke, Elliston, Kean, and the legitimate drama, for example; but I never talk about them, because I like the opera. I believe the notes of Mario, in the "Prophète," to be at least as pleasing to the ear as the rolling *r* of the late Mr. Kemble. Many a pleasant day I have spent outside the stage-coach; but I do not grumble at railways. If any man says you cannot enjoy a sight of the country from a

railway carriage, I differ with him. If he says you have no time to observe a hedge or a post against your nose, I admit it; but let him take a view of the country, and I say he will, in most cases, remain long enough in the same landscape to observe its beauties. I am ready to try anything except patent medicines and Protectionist Ministers. Attracted by an announcement in the 'Times' (for example) that "Hadjee Allee, the celebrated Indian cook, having arrived at the Bengal Hotel, makes Indian Dupeajja, and Keorma, Jerdu and Krooma Plow, Indian Coaptu, Kitcheree, Mancooly, and Cawabs," I sauntered into the Bengal Hotel some years ago. I know the merits of old English fare, and could live contentedly upon "plain roast and boiled;" but I determined to give Hadjee Allee a chance of convincing me: so I called, if I remember correctly, for a "couple of cawabs," by way of commencement. "A couple of cawabs, sir?" said the waiter; "cawabs is a soup, sir." "Very good," said I; "then bring me a basin of cawabs." I was not ashamed of my ignorance. I came there to learn, and I did learn; though I burnt my mouth in the trial. These are my principles; and I think I have said enough to show the difference between myself and Fitz-Baynard.

When I was a young man I wrote poetry. All young men did not write poetry then, as they did afterwards, when Lord Byron came more into fashion. I recollect, when Lord Byron died, it was generally considered that if he had not died, as he did, just on the right side of forty, his reputation would have been materially dam-

aged. I had held similar opinions when a youth; and had thought to "play the Roman fool" upon my thirty-ninth birthday. But my ideas had undergone some modification before that time. I was, indeed, within a short march of that poetical Rubicon, at the time of the noble lord's decease. But I knew that the sincerest of his admirers would cross the fatal line if his turn came; and I was sure that Lord Byron had an intention of doing so, if he had not been cut off in his youth. I remember a stanza in Don Juan, in which an allusion is made to the author's intention of purchasing a peruke; with a speculation upon the probable appearance of his hair at forty; from which I infer, that with a full consciousness of the fact that time was fast hurrying him towards that critical period, he had taken the resolution calmly to abide the event. And why should he not? Do such minds grow old?

That *I* have contrived to keep something of my juvenility, I think is pretty well proved by the fact of my being still the president of the "Youthful Britons." And how have I done this? Not by standing stock-still, and bending my back for the years to play at leap-frog over it; and growling at everybody else because they would not stand still in like manner. Neither was it by constantly "thinking of my grave," as I overheard my pious, well-meaning old landlady say I ought to be doing "at my time of life;" but I am not offended. Here am I in my sixty-sixth year, as youthful as ever I was, and as cheerful, thank God! Three stairs at a time is my way of getting up stairs; and, as to playing

the fiddle, I flatter myself I can tear my way through Beethoven's "mad" quartette with the fiery vigour of a much younger fiddler. I walked down to Rochester one day last summer, and got up the next morning as fresh as a daisy. I don't say I could stand such a life as our friend Stow leads. My wild oats are sown. But I can walk a match, or bowl a ball at cricket, with most men. Ask any of our club if their hands have ever tingled after blocking a ball from me. And do I owe all this to nature? I think not.

What I have said, what I do say, and what I will say, as long as I have health (and I flatter myself I have as much of that article as most people), is, that ninety-nine times out of a hundred a man need not grow old unless he likes. This is what you may learn from looking at Fitz-Baynard, and then at me; this is the moral of what I have been saying. This is the important truth which I have to proclaim—I believe that I have discovered the true Elixir of Life. I am not fond of making myself conspicuous, in print, or elsewhere; but my motives are philanthropic motives. I am ready to do a little good where I can. I did not sit down to write this for the mere sake of abusing Fitz-Baynard, in a book that he will not read; but I say, that if Fitz-Baynard senior, or any of Fitz-Baynard senior's class, feel themselves to be miserable old fellows, they have none but themselves to blame. For, let me tell them, that it is not years, nor bald heads, that constitute the right definition of old age. While a man keeps up in the march, and does not stand still

to look back, he is as good as any of them. It is giving in that does it; it is being lazy and over-comfortable—fancying that you have marched far enough; that there is no better land than that you have come to; and persuading yourself that you do not envy those who have gone on, and left you behind; and, when a man so persuades himself, and tries so to persuade others, he is become an old fellow, and a Fitz-Baynard senior.

Now I consider our friend knocked under in the year 1825. I regard his coat, trousers, hat, and watch-guard as so many outward symbols of that inward stoppage which took place in that year. To any person acquainted with the history of costume, the fact is as clear as the date of a cathedral to a student of architecture. There he stands, as perfect an embalmment of the past as any Roman idler, suddenly embedded in ashes in the streets of Herculaneum. In the year '25 he rebelled against the great law of change and movement; and there he stands to this day, grumbling, and trying to persuade us to rebel too. But we won't.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE.

THOUGH every English housekeeper is said to be, and is, in the eye of the law, theoretically at least, the lord of a castle, I should like to know how many times out of ten, the lawful master of the house—the payer of rent and taxes—may be the real lord, enjoying all the rights and privileges, the security, the tranquillity, which might be supposed to be comprised in the idea of a castle. And how many times an exaggerated respect for the liberty of another, to whom he has alienated a tithe of his home, makes his house no longer his, but his lodger's castle. And how often it is his wife's castle, or his friend's, or relations' castle; and how often he is subjected to such annoyances, from within and without, as make it, in these days when the law no longer recognises the lord's right to project a domestic disturber from an engine, or to stand at a loop-hole, and pick off besiegers with a cross-bow, only a keen satire to remind him of the maxim. If there were any chance of getting them filled up honestly, I would like to have schedules, with columns for every one of these questions, left at every castle in the kingdom, on a certain day. A blue book might be the result, which should give to

the foreigner a correct notion of the English home, called, with self-glorification, a Castle.

Ask my old school-fellow, Knightbell, who is in the unhappy position of the hare in the fable—having many friends—and who deserts a comfortable home (where his own numerous family, besides some of his relations by marriage, make his happiness their constant study), to consume the hours of night over 'Thompson's Practice of Obstetric Physic,' in an inhospitable chamber, in a house in R—cq—t Court. I have a sincere esteem for Knightbell, and I know what he has undergone. No sum of money, no friendly desire to remove the unfounded suspicions of his amiable wife,—no incentive, short of racks and thumbscrews, applied in the darkest dungeons of the Inquisition, amid the shrieks and demoniac laughter of other tortured victims,—should ever induce me to insert the three vowels which are necessary to complete the name of his place of retreat. Only myself, and a trusty and devoted retainer—who knows where to find his master when certain events, which take place at uncertain hours, require his prompt attendance—could make that name intelligible to the public. We are the sole depositaries of his secret; and, unless Mrs. K. should, Dalilah-like, wheedle it from him in a moment of fondness and confidence, or unless one of my friends most persevering of button-holders, under the direction of a clairvoyant, and guided by a bloodhound, should track his footsteps to R—cq—t Court, it will remain for ever unknown to the world! It is vain to say that my friend might,

by a determined exercise of the will, have secured that peace and tranquillity at home, which he is now compelled to seek beside a solitary hearth, and in a stranger's dwelling. If you do not happen to be one of the many friends alluded to, making that remark in keen derision, I reply that it is impossible to imagine what you would do in any man's situation, unless you can fully identify yourself with that man, and take into account the whole of the circumstances in which he is placed. Poor K., who endured much, and long, before he suffered himself to be goaded into the step which I have described, is of a gentle and amiable disposition; but his household, I regret to say, is not in that state of order which can only be insured by unity in the directorship.

Again; I know another gentleman, whose name I am not at liberty to publish. If you were to call upon him (supposing you knew his name and address), and casually, in the course of conversation, were to say (admitting you were sufficiently intimate with him to make a familiar observation of the kind), "an Englishman's house is his castle," would that seem to him other than a bitter sarcasm? Might we not expect that his eye would fix itself upon you, with the intensity of a basilisk's; that his nostril would dilate; that his lip would curl; that his brow would darken; in short, that his whole countenance would undergo a rapid transformation? His story is pretty well known, but it may be told in a few words. On a windy afternoon, in the month of March, 1848, shortly after the

occurrence of those important events in France, which drove the King of the French an exile (with an assumed name) to the shores of England, a gentleman—whose beard and moustache betrayed his foreign origin—proceeded, followed by a porter bearing a carpet-bag, through a retired and quiet street in the neighbourhood of Soho Square. From his glancing alternately at every house on each side of the way, it might have struck the casual observer that he was seeking for some particular house, in a street whose doors had been numbered according to the independent whim of various proprietors; or that, knowing no number, he sought, by an effort of memory, to recall the outward characteristics of a house that he had visited long ago—perhaps in the sunny time of boyhood. But, upon more careful observation, it would have been seen that he did not stay to look above the knockers, nor did he glance upward to take into his eye the general appearance of each house, but merely gave a hurried look at the ground-floor windows, and passed on.

Such a course readily suggested to a thoughtful mind that he was seeking a lodging. He stopped at last before a house having the words "Furnished Apartments to let," in the window, and "Mr. ——, architect," upon the door. He knocked, entered, and saw the architect (whose name, I have before said, I am not at liberty to publish); the apartments were taken, references were given; two months' trial showed the lodger to be a man of quiet habits; and subsequently the architect's first floor was let to the foreigner (who, by the way, was said to be a nobleman in his

own country) for a term of three years certain. Up to this point there is every reason to believe that the proceedings of the foreigner were taken in a *bonâ fide* spirit. Time rolled on. They were now at the end of June, in the same year, a period at which an unsuccessful insurrection in the French capital, besides certain reactionary measures in other parts of the Continent, had sent another wave of foreign immigration to break upon our shores. One afternoon another foreigner knocked at the architect's door; he was enveloped in a singular garment, which appeared to the English eye to partake equally of the natures of a coat and a cloak, being fantastically braided in front, and ornamented behind with a large hood, shaped like a heart, and lined with crimson. A tall man, bearing a case, which appeared to contain a violoncello, or some other bulky musical instrument, was beside him. The foreign nobleman met him upon the threshold, uttered a cry of mingled surprise and delight, flung himself into his arms, and embraced him with fervour, to the great astonishment of an unmarried lady, who resided, with a parrot, in the parlors of the opposite house. The rest is easily narrated—it is an oft-repeated tale. The first floor of the architect's (hitherto) unassuming home was brilliantly illuminated every evening; numbers of foreigners passed up the stairs, and were never seen to come down again by the last person retiring to bed in the architect's family. Mingled sounds of many voices and instruments (in which the deep tones of the violoncello were always predominant) were heard by the architect, his family, and every one else in the street.

The architect remonstrated with the foreign nobleman; who declined to restrict the amusements of his friend, to whom, he said, he was indebted for the life of an only sister, once saved by his intrepidity in stopping the horses of her carriage, which were fast hurrying her towards a precipice. The landlord offered a compromise, in vain; wrote to the 'Times' newspaper, and applied to a magistrate. The latter told him there was no remedy, and the proverb about an Englishman's castle turned out to be "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare."

The story may be a trite one; but it is only the more powerful against the proverb. I could multiply instances of a less adventitious character. Moreover, it is not because the Englishman does not live in a great house, with a hundred other people, and consign the key of his chamber to the hands of a prying porter, that he enjoys more privacy or tranquillity than the Frenchman. It is not because the Englishman has a street door, and the Frenchman has none, that the former is more free from disturbance and annoyance. Nay, the street door is itself, instead of being a protection, a positive source of annoyance. If I had no street door, could people come knocking and kicking against it all day to know if I want a door-mat, a rope of onions, a 'History of England,' a 'Family Devotion,' 'Views of Palestine,' coming out in sixpenny parts, specimens of drapery which "I needn't pay for, at present," crockery, a box of steel-pens, matches, a Dutch clock, a paper of needles; or to know whether I have any old clothes to exchange for money, or plates and

dishes, or geraniums (with no roots to them); or any old umbrellas, or bottles, or bones? Or if I have any rags to sell; or knives or scissors to grind? There is a good deal of timber about my house, which conducts the sound, and my hearing is painfully acute. No part of my premises is sufficiently remote from the street door to protect me from these noises. I sit upstairs, and hear these calls: many a time clenching my teeth, and muttering bitter things of my disturbers—things which, methinks, they would hardly like to hear.

H. (whose case lately came under my notice) has to thank his living in an English castle, with a massive knocker, for being disturbed at his studies the other night, while his servant had gone for the trimestrial holiday. Now if he had lived in France, and instead of enjoying the hollow boast of being the master of the house, he had been content to merge his individuality in the joint tenantship of something like a castle, with a porter to guard the gate, and to hold a preliminary parley with all intruders, he would not have been tempted to indulge in that hasty exclamation upon throwing down his book; he would have been spared the humiliation of answering, in person, a summons at his own street door; he would not have been startled by a blackened face, asking, in a hoarse mysterious whisper, the singular question whether "the master wanted such a thing as a tun o' coals;" he would not have had the trouble of explaining, in his own good-tempered manner (which has endeared him to all who know him), that the purchase of a ton of coals is a grave matter, and not usually negotiated with a stranger who knocks at

your door at an unseasonable hour; he would not have been tormented with the information that "the cart was jist round the corner," and that they could be put in, within five minutes, for twenty-one and six. He would not have been provoked to shut the door in the intruder's face; to force his foot from the threshold, where he kept it to prevent the shutting of the door; he would not have been compelled to hear such language as "Would eighteen bob break your back?" howled several times through his keyhole; which vulgar idiom has been kindly translated for me by young Mr. Phast, of Somerset House, into the politer terms of, "Would eighteen shillings be too much for you to pay, in the present state of your means?"

I rather think the idea of a place where one can repose, after the rude combat of daily life, as well as the idea of strength and security, is meant to be included in the expression, that "an Englishman's house is his castle." It is a mockery to tell me that nobody has a right to attack my home, to break open my door, to bore a hole in my wall, to violate the sanctity of my hearth, while they break my bell-wire, smear my door-step, lift the ponderous iron ring in the mouth of that animal on my door (who seems to grin at me in derision every time I enter), and give such single and double knocks as "throb thunder through my castle floors," all day, and especially in the morning. Any one whose castle happens to be in the suburbs of London will know that I am no fighter of shadows, no hypochondriacal writer of letters to the newspapers; but a man with a genuine grievance. I am not only attacked

incessantly, but subjected to insulting offers from the enemy himself, to victual and furnish me for the siege. It is nothing to me (I say this with all respect to those public-spirited men who have spoken before me) that these grievances have been stated before in public print. So long as the annoyance is allowed to increase and continue in a rampant state, I swear by the waters of Styx (lifting up my right hand), and under the penalty of loss of nectar, and forfeiture of one hundred years of Elysian bliss, not to cease to raise my feeble (though, I trust from the justice of my complaint, strong) voice against it. If I were practically, instead of theoretically, the lord of a castle, or in any position that would bear a comparison with the lord of a castle, should I endure one of these annoyances for a moment? Should I not arise from my slumber, and shake them off, as the lion shakes the dew-drops from his mane? Should I not, in the former case, rather cause to be collared the first intruder, and should I not have him brought before me, like a poacher before a landlord? Should I not ask him (like Duke Borgia, at Her Majesty's Theatre), how he dared to insult me in my castle-hall? And waiting (for form's sake) his reply, should I not immediately communicate to the Dutch-clock man (supposing a Dutch-clock man to be the first victim) that his hour was come? Or to the onion man (with a like supposition) that I was about to return his officious offer of a rope? Should I not, in short, have slung out one, at least, of my invaders—a terrible example to the rest—upon the topmost of my battlements, long ago?

I say, when we boast to the Frenchman that we do not pile our houses one upon another, to the eighth and ninth story, but cut them into thin slices, and spread them over the green fields to such a stretch, that to say that "myself and my friend reside in London," does not mean that we are within twelve cabman's miles of each other, when half our days are wasted in walking from place to place, and all for the sake of the privilege of each of us having a kind of castle to himself, with a garden behind, and the water laid on, it is only fair that he should be informed of a few of the drawbacks. Are we to be going on for ever, bragging of not being over-partial to balls or theatres, disliking masquerades, liking plain joints at home, and detesting *restaurants*, holding evenings at the *café* in detestation, hating the click of dominoes, liking carpets, and abominating wood fires, and saying not a word about these things? Did I not, conceited J. B.! who kept me awake, from Paris to St. Omers (you, who have thrice appeared to me since, in dreams, in very likeness of Gog or Magog, I know not which)—did I not listen to you, for six mortal hours, discoursing of England, glory, hearthstones, and the like, to your moustached neighbour, in French less intelligible to him than to me; till (out of sheer exhaustion) he admitted the social degradation of his native land, and dropped into slumber about twenty minutes before a fresh smell of sea-weed and a stentorian notice to prepare our tickets came in at our carriage window; and shall I not introduce him to you beside that hearth, in the centre of that castle, that he may see your weakness, as the

valet espies that of his master, according to a proverb, which cannot be unknown to that long-suffering Gaul? Was it strange (I ask), when I had taken a secret determination to arm him against another such attack from one of my countrymen, with a truer picture of the interior of the Briton's castle, and had followed him closely for that purpose, from the station to the steam-boat, was it at all remarkable that he shrank from me; that suddenly finding my eye fixed upon him, he recoiled; that he resisted my attempt to commence a conversation, with less politeness than I had generally met with from his countrymen; that on three several occasions he adroitly went round the funnel to escape me; and once fled to the forecastle, preferring its inferior accommodation, for awhile (although he had paid chief-cabin fare); or that when, heated with the chase, and determined not to be baffled, I approached him, with the intention of whispering in his ear, "Fear not, I am your friend," he suddenly disappeared down the companion-ladder; and retired to bed? If this should meet the eye of J. B., he is earnestly requested to answer this chain of questions in the affirmative (if he can), and generally to ponder upon this article, and the moral that it points.

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